

COBALT-SERIES

谷

瑞恵

伯爵と妖精

誓いのキスを夜明けまでに

集英社

Hakushaku to Yousei
vol.16: A kiss of oath before dawn

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[Novel Updates](#)

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Chapter 1: Left behind on that faraway island

There was a mansion that sat on the cliff of an island surrounded by the sea.

A powerful gust of wind constantly pounded against the glass window outside. Thick layers of clouds covered the sky. Despite that it was summer, the ocean was dark, cold, and gray.

Lydia was sitting in her room looking distantly into the sea, as she subconsciously tightened the shawl around her neck.

“Goodness, it’s very windy.”

The door opened and her father entered the room. Although the wind was no longer coming inside, he firmly held onto his hat in his chest without minding his dishevelled hair.

“Welcome home, Father. It’s certainly not a good day for a walk, isn’t it?”

Lydia left the window side and sat by the table.

“The tea is ready. Would you like some?”

“Yeah sure.”

They were currently in an isolated house on the land of the Mckeel. Lydia had been residing at the village house for several weeks now for her medical treatment.

The magical sword she was impaled by the fairies of the Aurorae, the blade of Fir Chlis

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had the power to aggravate the wound and reduce her health until it eventually took one's life. The land of McKeel was a place that contained a lot of ground power that could neutralize the harmful magic of the blade. Lydia needed to stay on this land until the poison of the blade subsided. As long as she was here, she could recuperate and be liberated from the pain and fever.

As her father discovered the situation, he was able to stay beside Lydia as a resident of the McKeel and look after her. Because of that Lydia was settling down and getting used to her life.

"Your complexion is looking better today, Lydia. Are you also physically recovering?"

"That seems to be the case. I could sleep soundly at night, and I've also recovered my appetite."

Trying to be as lively as possible, Lydia smiled lightly.

Although the poison in her body was alleviating, there was actually an emptiness inside her heart.

Edgar had abandoned her.

Although they were supposed to get married when they returned to London, Edgar left her on this island. She wanted to go back together but he did not approve of her request.

But she knew this would happen.

Lydia had to remain in this island for her treatment. If she leaves the island,

she will die from weakening. On the other hand, Edgar was in a position to be pursued as an enemy of McKeel's clan.

I want to be with him even if it was brief;

Lydia hoped to stay beside Edgar a little longer, but he did not accept such an option.

"Let's go home together," he said. Lydia was aware that it was a lie he could utmost give. But only a little, was expecting otherwise.

No, I'm certain that it wasn't a lie.

That was what he promised. He had to leave Lydia so that he could fulfill it.

Despite knowing this, promises can be ambiguous. Perhaps his feelings could change as the time passed.

This was why Lydia was filled with anxiety.

When she opened her eyes, Edgar was not there. She found herself in an unfamiliar mansion with Fergus of McKeel family. Although she had agreed to the proposal of staying here and recovering, she couldn't help but feel betrayed by Edgar.

However, perhaps recovering would take longer if she was feeling down and depressed. She was diligent in her recovery with such thoughts in mind.

"Lydia, did you know that this Highland is rich in agate?"

As a mineralogist, her father talked happily, taking out small stones from the hat he held.

“You told me about it the other day. Didn’t you find some around the beach?”

“I picked these up today; Onyx and carnelian.”

He took out a few orange colored stones and darkly striped patterned stones and placed them on the table. Whenever her father talked about stones, his face became childlike; innocent and bright.

Elaborately lecturing away his passion, he was definitely a huge ore fanatic, but most importantly, he was probably trying to distract her from her thoughts. Even though he probably heard about the situation from Edgar, he stayed and watched by her side without saying anything about it.

“Wow, these rocks must be rare.”

“Well, it’s actually not that rare. Both onyx and carnelian, even the rich green prase and bloodstones can all be found on this Highland in abundance.”

“That many gemstones in one place? It’s like a treasure island.”

“That’s right. But in reality they are all minerals of the same chalcedony category. They only contain slight differences in their makeups. They’re like siblings.”

Lydia poured some black tea into her father’s cup. Out of habit, he extended his arm towards the milk jar. This house was not theirs, but they were familiar with which chair was to be sat on and the different utensils on top of the table. Must be because they have been repeating the same tea time and same situation everyday.

Gently lifting her tea cup, the warmth of the black tea taste the same as what she had in London, almost making her forget the fact that she is on a faraway island of the Highlands.

The son of McKeel family, Fergus, welcomed Lydia to stay at their house and reached for her help without any inconvenience.

Everyone was being considerate of Lydia.
She really could not complain about anything.

Watching her father pleasantly stirring away his black tea, Lydia decided to open her mouth about what she been contemplating about recently.

“Father, shouldn’t you go back to London soon?”

Surprised at how it was unexpected, her father had his tea spoon lifted and looked at her way.

“I am fine now. I will stay here and slowly recover. So, you can return to the university.”

Lydia’s father still had his work as a professor. The summer vacation will be over soon and he can’t possibly just neglect his students.

“But, I can’t possibly just leave you here alone...”

“I mean, even before when you were working at London, I was fine living by myself at Scotland. You don’t need to worry about anything.”

“..... But you had Nico at the time. “

Apparently, father viewed Nico as somewhat like Lydia’s guardian. Even

though it was a fairy in the form of a cat.

Nico stayed to watch over the young Lydia, in place of her mother who passed away very early. Even though he was so small, looked like an ordinary cat, and could sometimes be unreliable, Nico was a guardian of few hundreds years old. Whenever Lydia get lost in the fairy realm he would always find her and bring her back.

Whenever Lydia was down, he would pull out some off-the-mark encouragement. His optimistic yet insolent attitude often calmed her down.

Although often whimsical and did whatever he liked, he was always there for her from birth. Lydia felt like he was an important part of her.

But on the other hand, for Nico, who was a fairy, living with a human may not have always been so great. Lydia regretted from her heart that she did not notice such for Nico.

“I am also not a child anymore. Besides, the McKeel’s family is related to my mother’s side as well, so they are my....”

“But they are trying to use you,” her father cut in, his expression became serious and grave. With a distressed expression, he took off his glasses and started wiping his circular lenses with his napkin.

As Lydia heaved a sigh, there was a knock at the door.

It was Fergus McKeel who opened it.

A red headed young man wearing a grid patterned quilt came in, greeting

Lydia and her father with a cheerful smile.

“Hello, Professor Carlton.”

Fergus made a hand gesture, stopping Lydia and her father from rising from their seat.

“Please, stay where you are. May I join you both?”

“Ah, yes. Most certainly.”

Even though Fergus was a son of the McKeel family, in his own judgement he made an agreement with Edgar to take care of Lydia at his place. With his own arbitrary decision, Edgar was able to leave the island without getting caught by the McKeel family.

Everyday, Fergus would come and visit.

Even with a swift horse, it took at least an hour from the main residence of the McKeel, but it didn't seem like he was bothered by it.

“Lydia, how are you feeling?”

“Not bad.”

“I see, that is good.” Fergus replied, looking relieved, his expression softening.

Although they didn't know him very well yet, you could tell that he was not a two-faced person.

“By the way, Fergus, did you figure out how long it will take for Lydia to fully recover?” Her father asked, putting his spectacles back on as he said it directly across from him.

“About that, it is best if we slowly observe and adjust to the situation. According to Patrick, if she does not need to stay in bed here the whole time, then it wouldn’t even take three years to heal.”

Patrick was the fairy doctor for the McKeel clan, just like how Lydia’s mother was. It went without saying that he had vast knowledge and understanding in regards to fairies.

“Three years, I see. I guess it won’t change the fact that it wouldn’t heal in one or two days.”

“Hey Father, rushing and worrying will do nothing. You should hurry back to London before the summer break ends.”

Lydia’s father sighed again.

“Professor Carlton, it is natural for you to be worried. However, I will take full responsibility of Miss Lydia’s well being,” Fergus assured with sincerity.

However, Lydia’s father knitted his eyebrows.

“You people have told Lydia that it will not be dangerous and brought her to this island. In place of her deceased mother, having her attend the ceremony to awaken the prophet, and in result, endangered her life.”

“Father! Fergus didn’t know it would be dangerous.”

“It was my father and Patrick’s arbitrary decision... though, I cannot say that I was not responsible for the outcome that you guys were deceived. Therefore, from now on I will not let my father and Patrick do as they please regarding Miss Lydia. Although I may be inexperienced, as the next chief, you have my

word,” said Fergus.

Nevertheless, Lydia’s father was still unconvinced.

“Could you please place your trust in Fergus?” asked another voice. A man with a black hair stood at the doorway. It was Patrick.

The person that took Lydia into the bridal ceremony to awaken the Prophet. However, the Prophet was no longer in the sacred land. Having lost his trump card to save the islands, what was he thinking right now? Does he plan to continuously use Lydia? No one could read anything from this poker face.

“The chief said that anything regarding to Miss Lydia’s treatment will be under Fergus’s full responsibility. He also wishes his heartfelt gratitude and sincerest apologies to professor Carlton,” said Patrick.

“Patrick, do you not intend to apologize then?” Fergus asked accusingly. It seems that Fergus did not like the fact that he suddenly appeared and advocated for him.

However, Patrick did not change his expression, and calmly replied,

“I am a fairy doctor. Professor Carlton’s wife was also a fairy doctor, and his daughter also claims to be one. As an individual that is involved with the fae and their magic, I think of myself and stand on equivalent terms with them. Whether or not the Prophet will bring about the danger, it is the fate of any fairy doctor who has the blood of McKeel Clan in them. Thus, I apologize that I am unable to take blame for the final outcome of this situation.”

Indeed, Lydia had gone to the sacred land on her own will. It was not for the McKeel family but for Edgar's sake. Moreover, she knew that she would be putting herself in danger, but she did not back out, so it really was not Patrick's fault. Rather, the origin of all the trouble was all caused by the evil Prince. Even more than Lydia's situation, Edgar was reluctant in bearing the fate of having to carry the burden of the Prince within him.

"Please forgive my rudeness. However, the oath and pledge from Highlanders is more valuable than their own lives. Fergus will not go back on his words."

"I know. My wife was the same way," said Lydia's father, sarcastically.

"Patrick, Professor Calton will continue to lose trust in us if you say it like that," Fergus interjected discontentedly.

"Then my apologies."

"So, why are you here today?"

"May I not send my respects to Miss Carlton?"

Patrick certainly did show up and visit once in awhile. But it was usually only if he was doing other business and just happened to be passing by. There must have been some other duty today as well.

"It seems like I'm not very welcome here so let's get this over with. I got my hands on a newspaper from London so I came to deliver it," Patrick said, taking out a tabloid paper that he had hidden behind his back.

"From London?" Lydia raised from her chair instinctively.

"Yes, and published here is the most recent news about Earl Ashenbert."

Just by hearing the name of Edgar, Lydia felt her chest tightening. The feeling of wanting to meet him and the feeling that maybe she had been cast away, both intertwined and mixed together.

“Patrick, why would you bring it in front of Lydia?”

“Oh, Fergus, are you trying to hide the truth from Miss Lydia?”

“Truth, what truth?” Lydia asked, while thinking that it would be better not to know, but also could not help to inquire further.

What Patrick brought was a popular newspaper, usually consisting of gossips, nothing credible. Even though she was afraid to know what was on the paper, she also really wanted to know how Edgar was doing.

“Please tell me, Patrick.”

“There seems to be rumors that the Earl had cancelled his engagement. He also has been going out and playing around with women.”

Her strength drained from her body and she fell right on her seat. Her father cast her a worried glance.

“Would you like to confirm it for yourself?” Fergus held out the newspaper and offered, but Lydia shook her head.

“Well then, let’s just dispose of this,” said Patrick and swiftly turned to leave. Fergus stood up in a state of irritation and followed him out.

“Lydia, the Earl will always need maintain his social activities. He cannot always refuse the invitations from ladies of the nobility.”

Lydia’s father who rarely defended Edgar, covered for him because Lydia was looking so devastated.

“Yes, I know. I understand...”

Lydia wanted to wholeheartedly trust Edgar. Therefore, she was terrified by the fact that Edgar may have changed his mind. He may become an Edgar that she doesn’t know anymore. Would he still, unchangingly, still think about Lydia?

“Father, when you return to London, make sure to look after Edgar and put a nail on his fickleness,” Lydia made a joke with a smile one way or another to alleviate the tense atmosphere, although she didn’t know how well she pulled off.

“Are you sure you are fine by yourself?” Lydia’s father asked. It seems like he also accepted that he has no choice but to return.

“Come visit me when you are on your break.”

“Okay. Oh right, after the socializing season is over, the Earl would probably have more free time to probably come visit as well, wouldn’t he?”

“I wonder about that. If he met me, I may fret about stopping the treatment again so...”

Her father still did not know that Edgar was in the position to be pursued because he was the sworn enemy of the McKeel Clan. He also did not know that

the memories of the Prince within Edgar stimulated the activation of the blade of Philis Chyris, that continuously hurt and tormented Lydia.

Under such circumstances, it was probably hard for Lydia to receive even one letter from Edgar. Even her engagement ring, which Lydia always wore before, was nowhere to be found when she woke up. Afterwards, she heard that it is better not to have anything related to Edgar around for her treatment, however, Lydia suspected that the engagement ring was specifically removed by Edgar himself.

In any case, Lydia was unable to write any letter by herself. Mainly because she could not think of anything to say to Edgar.

Even so, somewhere in the corner of Lydia's heart, she secretly hoped he could've taken her back with him. If that would've happened, maybe they would've had a period of happiness where they did not have to worry over the future.

"Lydia, you think you could trust Fergus?" Lydia's father emphasized again to make sure.

"Yes, Father. He genuinely cares for me, it's not just a facade."

Lydia knew that it was no use crying about such things and that she must pull herself together and toughen up.

Wanting to see Edgar. Her greatest wish was that hopefully when they meet again, neither will remain changed, and for that she decided to bear the loneliness alone.

Following Patrick, who went out of the mansion to board the horse carriage, Fergus was able to catch up and stop him.

“Patrick, what is your problem? Talking about the matters regarding the Earl right in front of Lydia!”

“I was just checking, on how much trust Ms. Carlton has in the Earl.”

Confused, Fergus furrowed his brows. Seeing this, Patrick once again brought out the newspaper.

“It seems that Earl Ashenbert has never returned to London. Although he may have left this island, he may still be around somewhere within the area of Hebrides Islands.”

“What? But, on this newspaper.....”

Puzzled by what he meant, Fergus spread open the newspaper. Scanning the headlines in English, he did not see any article regarding to the earl.

“Miss Carlton just had to check this newspaper to see through my lie. She probably suspected that it was a possible article considering how the Earl is, and was too scared to check and see if for herself..... Ha, it’s fragile, is it not?”

A gust of strong wind blew past and their quited cloaks floated up. Fergus and Patrick’s same McKeel family’s plaid lattice patterns covered the dull gray scenery around them.

“Lies, you say? Why.... Why would you do such things that would hurt her!? The Earl made the decision to save her! That’s why Lydia said that she has accepted this to undergo her treatment.”

“Is that the case? Who knows, the Earl Ashenbert may have done so just to save himself. You did promise him that you will let him go as long as he leaves Miss Carlton here. Moreover, if he is the successor of the Prince, keeping her around may bring upon his own prophesied fate that may destroy himself.”

“However, he hasn't returned to London yet right? Maybe he wants to remain as close to her as possible.....”

“Fergus, the Earl abandoned his fiancée, let it be that way.” Patrick asserted with a straight face. Calmly, he leaned in and whispered,” This is where you must take your advantage.”

“T.....take advantage you say?”

“It’s your chance to comfort her. Make her forget her love, and then fall in love with you.”

Fergus flustered. Indeed, he can’t deny the fact that he hoped a little for such a situation. And it may also seem that the Earl spoke sharply for that reason. But...

“Lying to her, and getting her attention, that sort of thing.....”

“You think it’s unfair?”

“I just want Lydia’s injury to heal. After that, whatever she will do, is not something we could force upon her right?”

Patrick sighed, as if he was a teacher in front of a incompetent student.

“The clan chief thought highly of you because you did a meritorious deed in finding Lady Carlton, but it was bad letting the Earl get away. However, the clan chief has a lot of expectations of you. If you want to meet his expectations then you should at least obtain Lydia Carlton. For the sake of the clan and the islands, as the future leader that must carry the clan further on, you understand don’t you?”

Right now, both the islands and the people living there were in crisis. Crop failure and disease were widespread, the land was bought cheaply by the British, and several villages were dispersed already.

It came to this because the magical power of the evil fairies, the Unseelie Court, was getting stronger within the island. And the root of all these problems was The Prince of Calamity, who was born and created shortly after the war a hundred years ago in order curse the Kingdom of England.

In order to oppose the Prince on a equal ground, the McKeel clan had been protecting the coffin in which the Prophet slept within. However they did not expect that the coffin was empty all along. It’s shrouded in mystery now, whether or not the Prophet had already awakened or that he is somewhere else, or perhaps he was never there to begin with. Lydia was a special person as she was a sole survivor who could communicate with fairies and was raised by the McKeel clan in order for her to cooperate with the Prophet.

“Fergus, we will investigate the whereabouts of the Prophet. We will never know if the Earl, no, The Prince, will ever set foot on this island once again. In any case, he is our enemy. It is your duty to win over Miss Carlton.”

Even if that was the case, Fergus did not want to deceive Lydia. However, Fergus stood there unable to talk back. Glancing sidelong towards him, Patrick disappeared in his horse carriage.

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The house of the Carlton family was very silent. In the idle rural town just before sunset, standing on the street where no shadows were even seen, Kelpie crossed his arms, troubled.

“Where the hell is Lydia?”

He was at Lydia’s home, near Edinburgh, Scotland. A while ago, Lydia left London, saying that she was going to visit her own house with her father. He heard that she would be coming back in two weeks, but it didn’t seem like she came back yet. So Kelpie came all the way to her house, but no one was in the house either. Even if he gazed at the sidewalks, there was no sign of anyone coming home.

Suddenly, he noticed some movement in the grass around his feet and he moved his gaze toward it. His eyes met with a small fairy. Surprised, the fairy flew up, and then fell down trying to escape in a hurry. Kelpie swiftly raised his leg and stepped on its tunic. He peeked into the fairy that was struggling to escape.

“You, you’re the fairy, a hobgoblin, that resides in this house aren't you?”

The fairy began to tremble and his face turned so blue he couldn't even talk.

“Hey, why are you so afraid? You know me, I often come over and see Lydia.”

Gradually, the hobgoblin raised his head fearfully.

The aquatic horse “Kelpie” was a fairy species that was known to have very frightening devilishness. They will devour human and livestock, and would even eat fairies in one gulp. When they transform into human form, they were extremely beautiful. They would use their devilish charms to capture their prey such as humans, but the fairies were usually aware and were never lead astray. Any type of fairies instinctively feared them.

But for him, he had taken a liking towards Lydia. Never seen her as a prey, but instead, he enjoyed to gaze upon and conversing with her. Therefore, he had no intention of hurting Lydia or any of the people and fairies surrounding her. Upon discovering that a strange Kelpie was here, as if losing all his strength, the hobgoblin collapsed onto the ground.

Removing his foot, Kelpie asked,
“Do you know where Lydia might have gone to?”
The small fairy timidly pointed somewhere.

“What? There’s no way I’ll be able to tell from that!”

The fairy jolted in fright.
(It’s the Hebrides.)

Someone else spoke up softly from the back of thicket for his companion who lost his own voice.

(That guy is very timid. Don’t surprise him too much.)

“Hebrides? At the Highlands?”

(They went together with McKeel Family’s fairy doctor who came from

Aurora's hometown.)

What did that mean exactly?

It wasn't before long that the presence of the hobgoblin disappeared. Kelpie crossed his arms and started to ponder. Speaking of the Mckeel family, they were the people that wanted to take Lydia as their bride. They were driven away by the Earl, but perhaps they did not give up yet.

"I believe that Ms. Lydia is unable to get out of the island for the time being."

A woman stepped out from the shadow of a building. She was dressed in what people would've considered as men's clothing in the human world.

"You, why are you here."

However, she was not human. She was once before, but died and was reborn as a seal fairy known as a selkie.

"Weren't you looking for me?"

Kelpie turned round to face her, placing his hands on his hip.

"You, you called me out because you said you have something to talk about, but you didn't even appear at where we we promised to meet," appalled Kelpie.

She was a woman who betrayed Earl Ashenbert. Her name was Ermine when she was a human. Currently, she is serving under a man named Ulysses, who was an aide that served for the previous Prince. She was that sort of woman. It is unclear if she's an enemy or ally, but at least it seemed that she is trying to protect the Earl and her brother who is serving under the Earl as his attendant.

She would provide useful information at times, so Kelpie decided to stay connected with her, but it's been awhile since he saw her.

"I'm sorry, I could not leave Ulysses's side for a while," the selkie said apologetically.

It seemed that Ulysses wanted the Earl to awaken as the Prince, but she did not want that to happen and hoped to prevent it. And of course, Kelpie felt the same way as her. He did not wish for Lydia to get hurt.

They had a uniform interest in that respect. However, Kelpie was doubtful on whether it was only Ulysses and his organization that are working behind her or not.

"So, here you are, does that mean that you are heading to the Highlands on Ulysses's order?"

She shrugged a little. If Lydia went to the Hebrides then so would've Earl. Something must have happened on that island.

"I wanted to tell you that Miss Lydia was in danger, but I did not make it in time. Now the situation has changed."

"Lydia is in danger you say!?"

Kelpie approached her with force as if he going to grab onto her. She stepped away quickly and went around behind the shrubs.

"Calm down and listen to me."

"I know, hurry up and tell me!"

“Neither Lord Edgar nor Miss Lydia returned from Hebrides. They were heading in the direction of the sacred land on the island, so there’s a possibility that they might have gotten hurt by the blade of Fir Chlis.”

“Fir Chlis? Why would they turn them into their enemy? They are definitely the rulers of the night sky, but they shouldn’t harm any human beings.”

“That is because Lord Edgar is their enemy. Prince was originally created on that island and he is the master of the evil fairies, the Unseelie Court,” explained the selkie.

Kelpie knew about the fact that Edgar forced the previous Prince to his death by taking upon Prince’s memories within himself. However, he did not know the relationship between the Prince and the border island of Highlands.

Kelpie had numerous questions that he wanted to ask, including what was happening with Lydia’s body, but he asked aloud what was concerning him the most.

“Then, if Lydia was with him she might have been hurt as well?”

Ermine nodded.

“Rather, I think something happened to Miss Lydia. If it was Lord Edgar that got hurt, the Earl of London, the mansion would be in panic by now.”

If so, then it was understandable that Lydia was not returning to London. He had heard that in order to heal wounds inflicted by the Fir Chlis, one must remain on their land which was abundantly accumulated with magical power of the Fir Chlis.

“Damn, so that’s the reason. Which island is the McKeel family’s property? What about Lydia?” Kelpie asked anxiously. Not knowing how to get to the whereabouts of Lydia, Kelpie gripped his fist and kicked back on his heel continuously.

“Oh yeah! That shorty might know exactly where Lydia is...”

He was referring to the overseer of the moonstone engagement ring, the mine fairy, Coblynau.

“Wait a second, I’m not done talking,” Ermine persisted, stopping Kelpie who transformed into the appearance of horse already and was trying to rush out at any minute.

“What!”

“There’s a medicine from ‘The Master of the Islands’, that could even get rid of the magical power of the Fir Chlis.”

“Medicine? I’ve never even heard of such thing.”

Kelpie did not know that there was even a fairy that could erase the power of the Fir Chlis. Wasn’t it true that the power of the blade can only be neutralized little by little by the magic power of Fir Chlis itself?

“It’s a legend that’s been passed down by the Selkies of the Hebrides. Long ago, ‘The Master of the Islands’ created beautiful islands within their own dreams. The humans wanted their islands, so they negotiated and made a contract, handed over the islands to humans and made them into reality. However, at that time, they also detached their memories and locked them up at certain location, along with the powerful magic that was used to create the

world of dreams. Ulysses is thinking that if he flickers around the presence of the medicine, Lord Edgar will move for it.”

“So Ulysses is aiming to obtain the magical power of dreams?”

“It is not a magic power that can be handled by humans, but in order to retrieve the medicine it is necessary to awaken the Master. Then, if the Master awakens and its magical powers is released, those islands will be the human world while covered up by powerful magic that would feed the evil fairies, the Unseelie Court, to their full capacity.”

Originally in the world of humans, fairies cannot exercise their magical power fully. This was because powers drifting within the nature are much weaker than the fairy realm. This was why most people cannot clearly see fairies, and they would not notice them even if they were being pranked. However, if the human world was covered with magical power like the fairy world, there might have direct occurrences such as the dragon flying through and burning towns.

“Is the Master an Unseelie Court?”

“I don’t know, I don’t think it is like that. The only thing I know, is that the only way to get close to source of the Master’s dreams is by the ship of the Blue Men of the Minch*, because they were the ones that were captured by the Master as they tried to steal their jewels. They were able to come out of dreams only as Blue Men.”

“Blue Men huh, they were rotten pirates, but it is dangerous for humans to get close.”

“The current Lord Edgar will be able to take control of them. Rather, what’s more dangerous is ‘The Master of the Islands’. We don’t know anything about them, and to awaken such a thing..... That’s why Kelpie, please stop Lord Edgar. Even if I were to warn him he would not believe me, but if you tell

him.....”

If that would end up protecting Lydia then that would be Kelpie’s intention. On the other hand, he also thought that if Earl turned into Prince, or even better drop dead, Lydia would be able to cut ties with him. Rather, wouldn’t that be better for Lydia’s sake?

“And? What about you? Are you going to the Hebrides?”

“It is Ulysses’s order to investigate the whereabouts of Lord Edgar, however, I.....I am going to escape from his side as it is.”

“Escape? Isn’t it hard to run away from him?”

“That’s true. But, I’ll do something about it.”

“Are you going to another owner?”

“What are you talking about?” Ermine asked, feigned an unpleasant act but Kelpie found her obstinacy quite amusing.

“Don’t be reckless,” he said, grinningly toward her as she raised her eyebrow and scowled.

“It’s quite sickening to be concerned by a Kelpie.”

“I’m not worried about you. Selkies are such an weak fairies. On top of that, you’re like a baby as a fairy. I’m just giving you a warning.”

“Yes. Well, if you are still alive, let’s meet again.”

She turned to her back, as her black shoulder length hair and frock coat fluttered away. Maybe she meant it might be necessary to meet again. Simply wanting to reunite, such a thing, considering her, was out of character. If she does not live then it was one less thing thing to keep him out of boredom. While thinking such stuff, Kelpie's jet-black mane trembled, and he started to run towards his own objective.

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Earl Ashenbert's mansion was located in a luxurious residential area of London. While the owner of the resident was absent, there was a young woman who visited the mansion. Even though she was wearing a dress for young lady, her coffee colored hair was tied up with rope. She did not even use horse carriage, was without her retainer, walked here on her own by foot. She rang the bell on the chalk white mansion, greeting "Hi" towards the butler that answered.

"Is Edgar home?" she asked, with an attitude as if a child came to visit her neighbor's house. Though, the butler was used to it.

"He has not returned from Scotland yet, Miss Lota."

"Is that so? Why, isn't he taking a while? He had the momentum as if he was going to hold the marriage ceremony right after he came back from greeting the grave of Lydia's mother."

"Yeah, that was the plan but," said the butler, blinking his round eyes with perplexity.

"Is there some kind of trouble?" Lota asked. Tomkins, the butler, shook his head sideways as if he panicking.

“No, I do not really know the situation in detail...”

“No, wait, you should know! I know, that fellow, Edgar, said to not tell me anything unnecessary again didn’t he? That bastard, there’s a limit of how much he wants to monopolize Lydia. Does he intend to even meddle with the girl’s socialization time!?”

“I’m sorry but please take your leave.”

Lota plunged into the entrance as the butler was trying to close the door.

“Hey, I don’t really care about Edgar. Where is Lydia? I’ve been writing letters to Scotland the whole time but I haven’t gotten any replies, so I thought it was strange and I came to check it out over here!”

Lota stepped in resiliently as she looked down on Tomkins’ light head. He raised his head smiling, however, using even more force trying to close the door on her.

“Is that so? Well unfortunately, we do not know anything about it so.”

Regardless of whether Lota was in between, the butler kept on pushing the door, continuously tightening and squeezing her body in between.

“Hey, what do you think you’re doing to a lady!”

“I’m very sorry, but I’ve been told to that I must do this in this situation by the master so.”

“What? That punk Edgar, who does he think I am?”

“This time particularly, he doesn’t want you to be involved in his business.”

“What did you say?”

“Umm, I’m sorry,”

At that moment, a voice timidly entered the conversation.

As Lota turned around, she saw a dull and frizzy haired young man standing there.

“Paul.”

Lota knew him well, he was Edgar’s friend.

“Lota and Mr.Tomkins.... what are you guys doing here?”

“Why hello there, Mr. Ferman.”

The butler suddenly released his hands from the door, because of that, Lota, had jumped into the entranceway and her face scraped against the carpet.

“Lota... are you alright?”

Paul rushed to her and held out his hand.

Lota stared up at Paul and took his hand with a smile.

For Lota, Paul was very strange because he was skillful in painting fairies.

Since long ago, because she was viewed as a companion to many men and although she was a genuine female, she was never seen as a woman.

Perhaps, Paul was a young man who was sincere towards anyone.

“Mr. Ferman, what brings you here today?” asked the butler, while giving an apologetic glance towards Lota who finally got up. Edgar must have told him to treat her discourteously.

“Ehh, umm, the Earl hasn’t returned yet? Do you know where he is right now?”

Lota asked the same question to Paul and Tomkins sighed.

“The Lord will not be back for awhile. And he told me that in the event that you came worried, to tell you that he is okay.”

“What about me? Does Lydia have something like a message for me?”

“There was nothing in particular. Just, don’t get involved.”

“What is up with that! What’s with the difference in treatment between me and Paul!”

Paul stopped Lota who was about to grab onto Tomkins.

“The message is the same, Lota. The Earl probably doesn’t want to drag us into his matters.”

Taking a deep breath, Lota calmed down.

“But Paul, aren’t you so curious that you can’t just stand still either?”

Paul nodded in agreement while feeling perplexed. He took a step towards the butler.

“Mr. Tomkins, I have talked to the Earl before he departed to Scotland, but it seems like he was going to start something himself. That is why I am very concerned. Although I might be unable to do anything, I know a little about the dark organization that he has been dealing with. Is it really alright for me to stand still and not do anything?”

As if he was troubled, Tomkins looked down.

Before long, he raised his head, and he adjusted his posture as if his heart has decided upon something.

“This way, please.”

Considering how he had a short and stout figure, he quite enthusiastically guided Paul and Lota into the parlor and after confirming that there were no other figures around the corridor, he closed the door.

While standing upright, he began to speak:

“I am also very concerned. Regarding my Lord, I do not know where he was and what he did before returning to England. However, I felt he has stepped his foot in something very dangerous. However, protecting this household is my job, and I understand it is not my position to meddle in any of his state of affairs.”

Lota and Paul probably knew more about Edgar’s situation than Tomkins. However, talking about this was not so easy.

“It’s been three hundred years since the master of the household has returned to England. I feel the same way in that I, too am fretting over on

whether there is something I can do. I just do not know what should be done.”

Nodding in deep approval, Lota stood up.

“At any rate, everyone shares the same feeling here. Maybe something happened to Edgar and Lydia and so we all want to support them and be their strength, don’t we?”

“But Lota, I wonder whether we’ll be very troublesome to the Earl. Because if you think about it, the Earl will clearly let us know when he needs help.”

While Paul was anxious, he was also reserved.

“Rather than that, it's almost lonely, that he just outright rejected us.”

Hearing this, Lota became increasingly convinced that something was happening beyond her speculation.

“If you are a companion that holds the same purpose, then he will make you work hard as much as possible. However, sometimes he would try his best not to get unrelated friends to be involved, even if that means severing their bonds..... that's why in the past, Edgar suddenly disappeared, even in front of us.”

When she received news on his whereabouts, it was when she heard that he disappeared in a city far away and got executed.

Edgar and Lota were never on good terms with each other and seeing that they were truly not even compatible, if she talked about that guy, it would merely infuriate her, but somehow she couldn’t help but recognise him as a companion. It was not conceited for her to say that Edgar probably also felt that

way. That was why, in the past, when Edgar disappeared without saying anything, it was probably because he had to cut all their ties so that the danger that was constantly surrounding him would not reach them.

But Lydia was the only one Edgar could not cut ties from even if he tried. Even after it seemed like he had come to the end of the matter with Prince, new problems arose, and even then she did not let go of him.

And so, Lota loved Lydia very much. It would've been fine even if only that rascal Edgar was left alone, but she was worried about entrusting Lydia alone with him.

"I'm going. After all, Edgar is an important friend already and he might need to put his distance between us, but he's probably fed up with that anyway.

"Lota..."

Paul appeared to have returned to himself and stood up.

"Ah, indeed, you're right. I...just don't want the Earl to hate me."

"Well, because I'm already hated by him, I don't mind being a nuisance to him. Well then, Tomkins, you somewhat know of Edgar's whereabouts, right? And you will also disobey your command by cooperating with us?"

"Mr. Ferman is the only person I will tell", Tomkins replied, standing upright and tightening his chest.

Lota clicked her tongue.

"Fine, I'll ask Paul about it later anyway."

Leaving the two of them, Lota walked out of the room in long strides.

[1]

The terms Fir Chlis/Phyr Chilis and Aurora fairies are used interchangeably throughout this volume. Fir Chlis are also known as The Nimble Men or Merry Dancers.

They are Hob-goblins that light up the aurora borealis.

[2]

The Blue Men of the Minch, (also known as Storm kelpies) are half humoid, half mermen who would frighten and drown many sailors who crossed between Northern Outer Hebrides and mainland Scotland.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue_men_of_the_Minch

Chapter 2: The Dream that the Master sees

On walls made of stones stacked up upon each other, were thatched roofs made of straw and heath; such small and cosy looking houses could be seen located sporadically along the coast.

That was one of the islands in the Hebrides. Edgar, together with Raven, had come thus far on the Connaughts' boat.

Although this place was far away from the island where Lydia was on, naturally, they had a purpose in coming here.

It was what Connaught's chief had told them.

In this Hebrides archipelago, which was said to have large and small islands amounting to nearly five hundred, lived many different clans. However, on an island floating in the middle of the straits, there resides what now rarely exists - a Shaman.

The Shaman was said to have knowledge of the ancient history of the archipelago, treatment of diseases and in addition, a very rich knowledge of charms against magic.

Although he did not know if the Shaman was still alive, Edgar was pinning his hopes on this.

Handing Lydia over to the McKeels was a most painful decision and he had considered the idea of bringing her back with him, as she wished, several times.

But if he did that, Lydia would surely die. Even though he knew that, Edgar had also felt inclined to give in to the temptation.

What's wrong with pursuing happiness out of passion without care for the future? If Lydia could not live for long, then it's fine if my life is short. If my role is to bury the memories in which the evil "Prince of Calamity" is embodied in entirely, then I might as well do just that ...

He considered it countless times, and he also rejected it countless times.

He could not lead Lydia, who he wanted to protect more than anything else, to her death with his own hands.

This feeling was the only thing that held him back.

Lydia might resent Edgar, who had gone so far as to deceive her as he had no choice but to leave her behind on the island. He did not know if she would forgive him when they meet again.

Despite his uneasiness, for now, Edgar could only pray that Lydia would focus on her recovery.

On the other hand, Edgar was unwilling to stay still and wait obediently for several years as things are.

Even though he had no choice but to entrust Lydia to the McKeels, they wanted Lydia as well. Since it wasn't impossible that they would claim that her injury would require a few years to heal when in reality it would only take a few months, he thought that he should be gathering accurate information on his

end as well.

Furthermore, he also wanted to investigate into whether there were any other treatment methods.

To such an Edgar, the Connaught clan chief's suggestion was his last ray of hope.

It was a tiny, deserted isle, but there was still a proper wharf. The Connaught boatman, who had led their boat to the bridge, said that it was built by the English.

After landing onto the island, new white-walled buildings and orderly paved roads stood out against the old stone houses which they had seen along the coast from the sea, as the two had entirely distinct airs about them.

It appeared that the acquisition of land by outsiders was also progressing rapidly on this island.

“Lord Edgar, could it be that shop?”

Raven pointed to a signboard that indicated that the shop was a bar. They had heard that the owner of that bar understood English and would probably know about the Shaman as well.

As they approached the building, they heard shouting voices from the direction of the alley. Then, a boy came rushing out from there, tripped over a pebble and fell right before them. Edgar stopped in his tracks.

“You cheeky damn brat!”

The boy looked to be around ten years old and the voice that shouted at him was in English.

One by one, men appeared from the narrow alley and surrounded the boy who tried to stand up. The last man who appeared, dressed in a gentleman-like manner, was probably the leader of the men.

That gentleman, who was probably a nouveau riche, opened his mouth and said:

"I had forked out the money and bought the land. I also have the documents. What's wrong with doing whatever I want on my own land as I please?"

He had papers which were rolled up in his hand. And with his other hand which held a cane, he struck the boy.

"And yet you ask me to leave? If you have complaints then you can purchase the land. I will tell you first, it's a large sum! If I have the money then I'll have no reason to remain in this inconvenient countryside! "

Grabbing the man's cane, the boy continued to resist firmly.

".....I have no money....but do not go near that island!"

The boy who stood up spoke in English as well.
He then thrust his head towards the gentleman.

Caught by surprise, the gentleman fell to the ground along with the boy. All the surrounding men who seemed to be hired caught the boy and pulled him away from their master.

"Let go of me! That island....does not belong to anyone! But you're saying that you bought it, that's so weird! Everyone says that you made up those documents...."

"Shut up!"

The man raised his hand again but was stopped mid-air.

Because Edgar had grabbed his hand.

"Don't you think you should stop? You're a disgrace to the English."

"W, what! Who are you?"

The man shook his hand off from Edgar's grip but as he turned around to size up Edgar, he frowned perplexedly.

"If you have something worthy for me to name myself to you, I could do so?"

After Edgar said that, the gentleman clearly lost his fighting spirit; he then stopped the surrounding man who were trying to approach Edgar.

"Stop, do you want to go against a noble!?"

If this sentence had been uttered a little later, Raven would have taken action.

However, at that time, Raven did not display any murderous intent in the least bit. Raven picked up the papers that the man dropped when he fell to the ground and handed them to Edgar.

"I see, so this is the title deed? But it's odd. The signature of the government official here belongs to a noble who I am familiar with, but the spelling is different."

The man turned pale and bit his lips.

"Perhaps, this may be evidence of forgery..."

The man quickly snatched the papers away from Edgar and tore it to pieces.

"Let's go."

He urged his men to leave. Yet at the same time, he turned around slightly and left a sharp parting remark.

"Sir, since you are an English noble you should understand. No good will come from standing up for Highlanders."

Edgar turned away from the men who had left, and bent down to the boy whose body was covered with wounds.

"Are you alright?"

The boy looked up at Edgar with a glare, probably because he was guarded against Edgar, who was also an English like the men before.

"What did you come here for? ... You too, are you here to buy land?"

"No, I heard that this island is the home of a famous Shaman, so I came to consult the Shaman. The Connaught clan chief said that the owner of the bar could help lead the way for me."

The boy glanced at the entrance of the bar which was not yet opened, then

stood up by himself.

He used his own sleeve to wipe the mud and blood off his face. He seemed to not have sustained any serious injury.

The boy had sharp and distinct features which had some kind of an exotic grace; his eyes and hair were also black.

As he understood that Edgar had come with the introduction of the Connaught clan chief, the boy's attitude somewhat softened.

"Well, if that's the case I can help lead the way. This is my home."

He suddenly held out his hand, seeming to ask for a tip.

"Really? Do you know of the Shaman?"

"Yeah. Besides, my Dad is away from home right now but don't you want to meet the Shaman quickly?"

Edgar nodded and handed the boy a penny copper coin. The boy put it into his pocket as if it was very important.

He started to walk immediately,

"You can get there by walking for thirty minutes."

"I see. By the way, do you always pick up fights that recklessly?"

Edgar felt interested to find out why a child would go against several large males that seriously.

The boy's expression suddenly stiffened, however, he thought about it a little and answered.

"..... It's not always. I dislike the English but it's thanks to them that my family's business is doing well."

"You don't seem to be in need of pocket money."

The boy's pocket made small noises with each step he took as the coins clashed against each other.

"But that's the only thing I cannot allow!"

He pointed towards the sea as he walked.

It was a flat island where almost no trees grew. One could probably see the sea no matter where they were on the island.

Just by moving one's head, one could see the dark indigo sea that extended endlessly across the horizon under the cloudy skies. However, one could imagine that the island which the boy pointed at was the small isolated island offshore.

That island wasn't that far away from where they were. Although the island had gentle sloping hills, it was a rather small island.

"Is there something on that island?"

"It's an uninhabited island. Even the people on this island do not go there carelessly. Yet those men said things like having bought the island, and were

making plans to dig up the crags. They're going after the jewels."

Having said that unwittingly, the boy stole a glance at Edgar's reaction as he regretted talking about the jewels. Although Edgar deliberately paid no attention to that point, the boy hurriedly added on.

"But even the pebbles on the island belong to the 'Master of the Islands'. Thieves are bound to meet with misfortune."

"The 'Master of the Islands'? Is that something like spirits or fairies?"

"No, the Master is the Master."

The boy said firmly in a reproving manner.

"If we do not treasure that Master, would trouble like stormy seas occur?"

"That's right. Though the English would only treat such things as nonsense."

"I wonder about that. My island is the same. Merrows live on the island, and if I do not work well with them the seas and island will be covered by storms."

As if he was surprised, the boy lifted his face and looked up towards Edgar.

"Sir's island?"

"My title is The Lord of Ibrazel. I have many fairy acquaintances. I feel that the world is not merely what humans know, so I think that I do have something in common with the people of the Highlands."

As he thought of Lydia who loved fairies, Edgar fell into the same pace as the

boy who believes in the 'Master of the Islands'. If Lydia was here, she would probably try to protect that small island desperately as if it was her own problem.

"I would think that the men earlier would probably never come again, but I'll still inform the administrative body to take note of the possibility of forged documentations circulating around."

How unlike me to say such officious things. Even though Edgar thought that, when he saw the boy let his guard down and look at him with shining eyes, Edgar genuinely felt glad.

Being apart from Lydia made Edgar endeavour to be even more aware of himself as the Blue Knight Earl.

Even though he had inherited Prince's memories, Lydia still promised to marry him. So he had to stay as himself.

"Thank you, Sir. ...No, Lord. Ah. We can see the Shaman's house."

Coming to a stop, the boy pointed to the top of a hill.

One could see a small black private house that stood by itself.

When Edgar informed the boy that it was fine to lead him until here, the boy nodded.

Strong winds suddenly blew from the sea against them and Edgar had to hold

down his hat. By the time he lifted his gaze, he could no longer see the boy's figure.

*

Stepping out from the mansion, Lydia walked slowly along the coast. Staying indoors all this while would only make her feel depressed so Fergus had invited her out for a walk out of concern towards her.

The winds were unusually gentle and the sun's rays shone through the gaps in the clouds. For Lydia who had somewhat regained her strength, it was a weather that was suitable to be outdoors.

"The sea looks blue today."

This morning, Lydia's father had left for London. Although the feeling of loneliness sank deeply into her heart, Lydia worked hard to speak out cheerfully.

"I wonder if Mother had also strolled along here before."

"She probably did. She's the daughter of the chief from the branch family so I've heard of her coming to the head family countless times. And since she's a fairy doctor, she probably felt an interest in lands like these."

Lydia went closer towards the beach. The waves that washed ashore came towards and went away from her playfully.

The gentle sea breeze caught her reddish brown hair which was coiled close to her ears by her bonnet.

As a tuft of her hair danced lightly around in the wind, it was as though Edgar was playing around with her hair.

Basked in the glittering rays of the summer sun, amazingly, her dull rust-coloured hair appeared to be transparent and caramel-coloured like Edgar had described it.

“Be careful.”

When she nearly lost her balance over the sand, Fergus stretched out his hands and supported Lydia.

It was always Edgar by my side. But it's different now. For a short while, Lydia thought about that in wonder. She then came back to her senses.

How can I be holding on to the hands of a man other than Edgar?

Lydia tried to free her hands but Fergus continued holding on to her hand as if he did not mind.

Since we are relatives, perhaps there is no need to be so conscious of it. Lydia changed the way she thought about it.

“It’s about time we go back?”

“I can’t be too far away from the cape right?”

“Yeah, if you’re not at a place where you can see that cape, there may be a negative effect on your body again.”

Fergus started to walk along the coast towards the cape while still holding on to Lydia’s hand.

Then, Lydia saw someone running towards them from the other direction.

“Miss Lydia - !”

That person was waving her hands widely. Her braids which fell against her back were leaping about.

“Kelly? It’s Kelly!”

“Eh- the girl from the Connaughts?”

As they looked on, Kelly approached them. Kelly caught her breath in front of Lydia and bowed formally.

“Miss Lydia, I’ll be serving you by your side once more.”

“Oh, is that so?”

Kelly had taken care of Lydia previously and Lydia was thankful to have a girl around her own age by her side. Lydia was happy and sincerely welcomed Kelly, but Fergus interrupted.

“Wait a moment. This place belongs to the McKeels’. I have no intention of employing a girl from the Connaughts. To begin with, both you and the Connaught family are under the patronage of the Earl of Ashenbert. ... I see, you came at the instigation of the Earl, didn’t you?”

“You’re wrong. This is the arrangement of the Connaught clan chief.”

“It’s the same! The Connaught clan chief does what the Earl tells him to.”

“In any case Mr Fergus, I’ll have you employ me.”

Kelly was awfully firm.

“Like I said, I can’t employ you!”

“You overlooked me at the McKeels’ mansion; even if you had told the truth to your Father or anyone else then, they would have found out about the Earl’s plan.”

Kelly, who said that, was blatantly threatening Fergus.

When Kelly secretly made contact with Lydia while carrying Edgar’s letter, she was found out by Fergus. Yet he had allowed Kelly to leave without any objection, as Lydia had wished.

Even now, Fergus was probably the only one who knew of the link between Edgar and the Connaughts. In other words, if Fergus did not employ Kelly, Kelly would tell on Fergus to his father.

Fergus, who was thoroughly disturbed, sighed in resignation.

“... Alright I get it! But you have to act as though you belong to the McKeels ok?”

“Yes. Please help to cover things up well.”

Lydia patted her chest down in relief and turned to face Kelly with a smile.

“That’s great. You’ll be my companion again right?”

“Yes, Miss. And my role is also to prevent any pests from coming near you.”

As she said that, Kelly glanced at Fergus. Once she verified that he was still holding on to Lydia's hand, she glared at him again.

"Are you talking about me? I'm so much more of a gentleman than any of those English gentlemen."

Fergus, who had released Lydia's hand, panicked and defended himself.

"A gentleman, is one who takes care not to be alone with an unmarried lady."

Fergus tut-tutted and spoke defiantly.

"Shut up. I'm a Highlander."

"A Highlander man will not have a lewd look on his face in front of ladies."

"I don't!"

Lydia was able to feel thankful towards Fergus' nonchalance and so Lydia tried to smile in order to brighten up her own spirits.

But even so, even when they had a lively conversation such as this, the loneliness in her heart did not vanish.

By the time she realized it, Edgar had become an irreplaceable existence to her.

Even when she found out that he was shouldering something unthinkable, even when she thought of him deceiving her and abandoning her, in spite of all that, Lydia still wished to be reunited with him.

*

“I’m not very familiar with the McKeels. I’ve certainly heard that since the olden days, that family has had many people with extraordinary abilities, and they had called themselves as the Prophet or Fairy Doctors, but outsiders do not have the chance to know what goes on inside the Clan.”

Facing Edgar, the old lady who was known as the Shaman said that.

The house that stood by itself away from the village, was a building made out of stones stacked up against each other and had a thatched roof, as was commonly seen in the area. And the old lady who had been working in the field in front of the house, looked like an old farmer that can be seen anywhere.

But once they entered the house, the house was full of the smell of herbs and as they looked upon her wrinkled hands as she lit the candles, she appeared awfully witch-like.

“Are you a Fairy Doctor?”

“Though I have some knowledge of fairies, I can neither see nor hear them so I do not have those sorts of abilities.”

The old lady invited Edgar to take a seat while she herself sat beside the pot that was placed over the fireplace.

“And so, what is it you would like to ask, young lord?”

“About the Fir Chlis.”

“The fairies of aurora. It has been believed since the olden times that they are the light which protects the islands from the long and dark nights which are the

domain of the Unseelie Courts.”

“I heard that they are fairies which possess powerful magic.”

The old lady nodded gravely.

“They are the ones which wield the magical blades that can tear darkness into pieces...”

“Do you know the method to remove the poison caused by those blades?”

“I’ve never heard of Fir Chlis attacking humans.”

When the old lady looked at him to ascertain the truth, Edgar averted his eyes.

The one who the Fir Chlis targeted wasn’t Lydia but Edgar. Edgar wondered if he is becoming something that wasn’t human.

While he had doubts about whether he would truly be able to keep Prince’s influence under control like how it was now, Edgar couldn’t help but wish for Lydia.

“In any case, if it’s about the Fir Chlis’ magic, then the McKeels would be the ones who know best.”

Appearing to not intend to probe any further, the old lady said so indifferently towards Edgar who fell silent.

“I can’t depend on the McKeels.”

The old lady thought over a little and spoke again.

“What I know is only based on legend so I do not know if it is the truth or not. I heard that the one who gave the Fir Chlis their magic and made them the guards against darkness, is an existence known as the ‘Master of the Islands’. ... And if one were to drink the droplet that gushed forth from the Master’s spring, illnesses caused by any kind of magic would vanish at once.”

As he felt hope in those words, Edgar raised his face. As he thought, there is medicine that is effective towards the Fir Chlis’ blade. It was also a treatment method that did not take time.

“The Master of the Islands’ ... I heard about this earlier from a local here; is that an existence on the small island offshore?”

“Although it’s been said that that island belongs to the Master, no one knows if the Master is there. I heard that in the past, wine would be offered to the Master on that island every year. It’s been quite some time since people stopped practicing this ritual.”

“Why did people stop the offerings?”

If she were to tell Edgar that it was because the Master no longer exists, then all hopes would be crushed. Edgar clung on to hope and continued his questions.

“When I was still a child, I heard that because the Master’s dream was completed, there was now no worry about it waking up.”

“... That is to say, the offerings were made in order for the Master to sleep.”

“In any case, that is something that should stay asleep and there will be trouble for humans if it were to wake up.”

It was an enigmatic and ambiguous topic. The boy he met earlier had also said that the Master was not the same as the fae.

But if he were able to find the spring of the “Master of the Islands”, he may be able to bring Lydia back with him immediately.

“If the Master’s dream is destroyed, then the realm of dreams will begin to transgress into the human realm...”

While Edgar was sorting out his thoughts, the old lady muttered as if she were talking to herself.

Although those may have been important words, to Edgar, rather than to grasp the meaning of those words, what was more important was how he would go about obtaining the water that gushed forth from the springs.

“Where is the spring?”

“Naturally it’s in the Master’s dream.”

“How would I be able to go there?”

However, the old lady shook her head.

“I do not know anything beyond what I had told you.”

Edgar could only be dejected.

Even so, there was something he gained. Pulling himself together, Edgar thanked the old lady.

As he got up and was about to leave, she suddenly called him back as if something had just occurred to her mind.

“My Lord, who was it that you heard from?”

Wondering what it was about, Edgar stopped in his tracks.

“Be it the islands or the members of the clans, everything has completely changed from what it was in the past. I had thought that there is no longer anyone left on this island who knew about the link between that small island and the Master.”

“I see. Although it was a boy of around ten years of age, it seemed like he treasured the Master’s island. That’s right, he said that he was a child from the bar in the village.”

Once he said that, the old lady tilted her head sideways and smiled mysteriously.

“That family doesn’t have a boy. My lord, you may have some sort of affinity with these islands. ... Though I do not know if it’s something good or bad.”

Feeling as though he had met with something unreal, Edgar left the old lady’s house.

Raven who had been waiting outside, silently followed Edgar who walked on without saying a word.

After walking some distance from the old lady's house and arriving at the bottom of the hill where he parted with the boy earlier, Edgar finally turned to face Raven.

"Raven, we need to find that boy earlier. He may not be human so there's no doubt that he knows something important."

Raven who looked towards Edgar while in thought, suddenly shifted his gaze and walked to Edgar's side while displaying his wariness.

In the direction where Raven looked towards, stood a jet black horse with its mane flying about in the wind.

*

"Hey Kelly, it seems like I'll be able to become very skilled at embroidery while I'm here."

To Lydia who was at a mansion on a cape in the middle of nowhere, on an island that had nothing apart from the sky and the sea, the only thing she had in abundance of was time.

"Although I do not particularly like this, it's perfect for killing time."

Looking at Lydia who said that somewhat out of desperation, Kelly giggled as she entered the room carrying freshly washed sheets.

"Ah. But oh dear. At this rate, it seems like I'll forget all about the etiquette that I practiced hard on as well as the customs of nobles."

Lydia panicked as she suddenly realized that.

Since I will be returning to London immediately to get married once I recover from my injuries, it'll be a problem if I were to forget all that.

If I have to redo my bridal training, I wonder if the wedding will be postponed.

When she thought until that, she felt foolish. She did not even know when she would be able to get married so it was pointless to be bothered about having the wedding postponed.

She was even starting to doubt if she'll truly be able to get married.

When Lydia ended up pausing in her work, Kelly called out to her in concern.

"Miss, the fairy guests had left presents for you today as well."

Kelly then picked something up from the window side and went towards Lydia.

"Wow, what a beautiful pansy."

"Shall I put it into a vase?"

"That's right, I wonder if I can make this into a pressed flower. The room is becoming full of vases."

The top of the mantelpiece was already full of flowers brought by the fairies such that it was starting to resemble a field.

“Kelly, wait a moment. If I recall correctly, there are tools for making pressed flowers in the chest which Fergus had brought over for me.”

The moment the idea came to her, Lydia stood up.

If she concentrated on something, she would be able to not think of Edgar. That’s why nowadays, Lydia ended up immediately putting into action any ideas that came to mind so much that she was rarely settled down.

When she entered the room that became a storeroom, she immediately saw the chest.

Fergus had filled the chest with various tools and brought it over so that Lydia would not be bored.

Naturally it contained embroidery tools, but apart from that there were also books, board games, chess sets, paint, canvas, and even a violin.

Fergus, who said that he did not know what Lydia was interested in, had collected everything which a young girl of society might be interested in.

Even so, there were even items meant for children, such as soft toys, marbles and hoops.

What a funny person.

As Lydia remembered how Fergus had brought all these items into the mansion in an embarrassed yet slightly triumphant manner, she relaxed her stiff expression and smiled.

If it were Edgar, it was his forte to indirectly find out what the girl he set his

sights on was interested in, and surprise the girl by suddenly presenting to her what she likes.

Lydia had never once disliked any of the presents from him.

On the other hand, even though Fergus was clumsy, she found him likeable.

Come to think of it, to Lydia, it felt like it a wonder that she fell in love with a clever and popular man like Edgar.

She had always thought that someone simple would be easier to understand and get along with for her.

As she

unwittingly ended up comparing Fergus with Edgar, she felt somewhat embarrassed, but it couldn't be helped as apart from Edgar, she did not know of any other man who had gotten close to her.

She soon found the toolbox to make pressed flowers. When she was about to retrieve the toolbox, she heard talking voices and turned around towards the door.

On the other side of the door which was left slightly ajar, someone was standing there in conversation. The voice which was somewhat hushed seemed to be Fergus'.

"On the island in the straits...?"

I wonder if he came to visit again today. I wonder who he is talking to.

Before she had time to think about it, she heard the other person's voice. It was Patrick.

"Yes, it seems that the Earl of Ashenbert is there."

Just by hearing Edgar's name caused Lydia's body to burn up in an instant. Unable to move, Lydia pricked up her ears and listened attentively.

By straits, they were probably referring to the area of the seas between the Inner and Outer Hebrides.

Edgar's there?

Wasn't he bustling about the high society in London?

"What's he doing in that kind of place?"

"He is probably collecting information on the 'Master of the Islands'."

"By 'Master' you mean ... that legend? The one about how this Hebrides Archipelago was originally the dream the Master sees."

"That's right."

"Isn't that just a legend?"

"We can't say that is entirely the case."

"But, these islands are not a dream. It's a reality of the human realm."

"That's because the Master had ceded the islands in the dream to humans. Humans wanted the beautiful islands, while the Master wanted a sleep that was

undisturbed by anyone. Since the interests of both parties were aligned, a contract was formed. The Master had cut the dream off from the human world and shut itself inside the dream, while humans had offered wine yearly until that dream was completed and worked hard for the Master to continue sleeping. That is the kind of legend it is.”

“Hehh, then, what happens when the Master awakens?”

“The world will become one that is difficult to say that it belongs to humans.”

“I don’t really understand, but does the Master really exist?”

“I don’t know.”

“... then, what is the Earl trying to do?”

“I don’t know. Matters concerning the Master are too ancient, and information already isn’t passed down to us properly so I do not know what the Earl can do ... Only that, his objective is most probably the spring that is said to be able to cure the wounds caused by Fir Chlis.”

Shocked, Lydia became conscious of a dull pain in the wound on her back.

Is Patrick saying that, there is another way to treat her injury which was caused by the Fir Chlis’ blade, apart from staying here?

“Because it’s said that the droplet from the Master’s spring can cure any illness in an instant.”

“What is this about?”

Lydia raised her voice unexpectedly.

She opened the door and walked towards the both of them.

Fergus turned to face her in shock but Patrick was calm.

“Good day to you. I’m sorry for disturbing.”

“Mr. Patrick, you said that the only way to treat my injury was to spend time here until the poisonous air is extracted didn’t you? To think that you kept quiet even though you knew there was medicine that would cure me in an instant, that’s terrible.”

He shrugged his shoulders lightly.

“Since you’ve heard what we said you should understand. There is no way to find such a medicine.”

“I wonder about that. I mean, aren’t you thinking that Edgar is looking for that? To me you lied by telling me that he was in London, yet you were investigating into what Edgar was doing... You’re wary of the possibility of the ‘Master of the Islands’ being real and of Edgar getting close to it.”

Sighing, Patrick who became serious, turned to face Lydia.

“Yes, it’s as you said. Lord Ashenbert is the “Prince of Calamity”. He can be in control of the magic of the Unseelie Courts. In the event that the legend contains some truth in it, if the Master wakes up, the magic that was trapped inside the dream will fill the islands. It will then become easy for the Prince of Calamity to use the Unseelie Courts as his battle strength.”

The problem was not that Edgar was searching for medicine for Lydia’s sake; Patrick was cautious towards “Prince”.

Finally realizing that, Lydia was taken aback; Patrick continued to pressurize her.

“Miss Lydia, if you are also a Fairy Doctor, please think about whether you could stop the Earl. To begin with, the human realm is a place where magic does not work like it does in the fairy realm. Even so, because of the birth of the Prince of Calamity, the Unseelie Courts are gaining in strength. In such a current situation, do you understand what will happen if the magical domain pours out into the human realm?”

“But, Edgar has no intention of becoming Prince. He intends to keep Prince’s memories and objectives sealed ...”

“No, he is steadily getting closer to Prince. And all that, is for your sake.”

For my sake?

“Patrick, stop.”

Fergus tried to stop Patrick, but Patrick looked into Lydia’s eyes coldly.

“The Earl, he tried to kill the Prophet because he did not want you to be taken away from him. Even before that, he had chosen to obtain the magic of the Unseelie Courts, an act which is a taboo for humans, in order to protect you from the Trow.”

That’s right, on each of those times, Edgar had to turn Prince’s memories into his, even though he should not touch them.

“Lord Ashenbert is a dangerous person. Instead of thinking about whether it is

right or wrong, he chooses to prioritize protecting you.”

...But, what is right?

“Are you saying that Edgar is wrong? You all don’t know anything!”

Edgar was a victim of Prince. He had been fighting against their organization yet when he finally achieved his revenge, he was made into the new “Prince”.

“To you people and the Prophet, you all think that everything will be fine so long as Edgar doesn’t exist, but is that what is right? Just as you wish to protect the Clan, Edgar’s only fighting for the people who are important to him!”

Patrick was unperturbed by Lydia’s desperate rebuttal.

He sneered as if it was something amusing.

“If you do not want the Earl to become Prince, there is a definite way to ensure that. It is to dissolve your engagement with him.”

“Wh-What are you ...”

“If your feelings have changed, then Lord Ashenbert will have no need to obtain the medicine. It will be meaningless for him to use the powers of the Unseelie Courts. He will then quickly return to London and if he is able to lead his life without being concerned with the islands’ magic or Prince’s fate, don’t you think he will be able to remain as he is like a normal human?”

It’s because of Lydia, that Edgar will end up crossing the line.

It’s as Patrick said.

Lydia, who wished to stay by Edgar’s side even at the risk of her life, was in a

way actually driving Edgar into a corner.

There's no doubt that Edgar was thinking of a way to treat her injury that did not require time, for her sake.

In order to achieve that, Edgar might have to unlock Prince's memories again.

Unable to stay on, Lydia ran away.

"Ah-, Oi, Lydia!"

Although she heard Fergus' voice calling her back, Lydia continued to rush out from the mansion.

She even thought that she should have refused treatment.

Even though she had pleaded with Edgar that if he were to leave her behind she would not accept any treatment, he still left her. She realized that when she woke up in this mansion and she should have been able to find an opportunity and run away.

The reason why she did not do so was because she still loved Edgar. She made the resolution to return to his side no matter how many years it took, if Edgar still hoped for a future together with her.

Although she felt uncertain about what might happen in the meantime until then, she tried to be optimistic.

But, if her own existence may cause Edgar to change, then wouldn't it be better if she were gone?

As she ran, Lydia headed towards the edge of the cape.

Stopping right in front of the edge of the cliff, she fell to her knees as she looked downwards.

She felt scared. Of course, it was because Lydia did not wish to die. She had said that she did not mind dying because what frightened her the most was being apart from Edgar.

Because it feels like, if we were apart, Edgar will cease to stay as himself.

Or, even if I stay by his side, that will still happen someday.

What should I do?

"Lydia!"

Suddenly, her arms were pulled. By the time she realized it, Lydia had fallen into Fergus' arms.

Surprised, she tried to thrust him away with both hands, but he continued to hold her and refused to let her go.

"Don't do anything foolish."

"I-I wasn't doing anything. I was just looking at the sea."

"Eh, the sea? Really...?"

As Fergus released his hold, Lydia pushed him aside and quickly distanced herself from him.

Fergus looked at Lydia worryingly and was about to speak out, but Lydia spoke first in order to interrupt him.

“You don’t have to pretend to worry about me.”

“Pretend?”

“Even you think that it’s better if I break up with Edgar isn’t it? I guess that’s true; you’re after all the next clan chief of the McKeels. When you made a deal with Edgar, was it because you wanted to separate us and persuade me? I guess I mustn’t think that you’re different from Patrick and that you worry about me from a neutral stance.”

“No, I...”

When Fergus tried to come closer, Lydia stepped back away from him. Disturbed by Lydia’s attitude towards him, he raised his voice out of desperation.

“Yeah, it’s true that I can’t stand that Earl. But I’m not doing this for the McKeels. I just want to be of help to you.”

“Stop! You aren’t supposed to say things like that anymore, aren’t you? To begin with, you only saw me as your “betrothed” and it’s not as though you fell in love with me.”

“But now, I’ve come to know about you. Even so, can’t I fall in love with you?”

Fergus looked at her directly, and Lydia averted her eyes.

“You can’t. I have a fiancé.”

Even as she said that, he did not waver. Because he knew that that her fiancé cannot meet or even come close to Lydia.

“Patrick isn’t wrong in saying that. If you stay with the Earl, you will become unfortunate.”

“Don’t decide for us.”

Lydia said that while casting her eyes downward. She felt irritated at herself for being unable to refute resolutely.

“While it’s true that that guy may be willing to do anything for you, but is that really for your benefit? If he were to stain his hands with the magic of the Unseelie Courts again, it will only pain you further.”

Unbeknownst to her, Fergus had shortened the distance between them and Lydia’s arm was grabbed by him.

“He should know that there is no way he could protect his fiancée by becoming something evil himself.”

The winds blew. The kilt which was worn over Fergus’ shoulder blew about and obscured Lydia’s vision.

At the same time, she was held in an embrace. Being held by strong arms, Lydia was unable to move.

Fergus embraced Lydia with all his being and would not let her go.

“Sto...”

“Fall in love with me... If it were me, I would never do anything that would cause you pain. The Earl is wrong.”

Edgar...

As she shouted his name in her heart in a bid to call for help, at the same time, Lydia became sad.

Why? Why can't I stay by your side?

I may never be able to see you again.

Everything was trying to separate Lydia from him. Be it destiny, the Prophet, or even Fergus.

When she was about to lose all her strength, Fergus suddenly let go of Lydia.

“Ouch...”

Fergus said that as he held down his head and turned around.

“What are you doing to Miss Lydia!?”

Kelly held on to a broom and tried to attack Fergus once more.

“Oi, hang on, stop...”

“No, I can't forgive you! As the son of the clan chief, to think that you forced yourself on a guest you were supposed to protect... You are a disgrace to the Highlanders!”

Fergus desperately avoided Kelly, who was waving the broom about.

Unable to spare any strength to find the current scene humorous, Lydia, who stood stock still, felt as though she was about to be crushed by the pain in her chest.

The moment she felt suffocated, her vision became dark.

“Miss!”

Kelly’s voice sounded far off. Her consciousness felt distant.

I want to meet Edgar once more.

That was the only thought on Lydia’s mind.

Just once more. If this wish is granted, I would want to think that I’ll be able to make a decision that’s in his best interests calmly.

*

Edgar, who had occupied a room in a small lodging on the island in the straits, was facing Kelpie.

Kelpie, who had taken the form of a fearless looking youth with black curly hair, stood with his arms crossed and looked down at Edgar.

“Where’s Lydia?”

“That is none of your business.”

“It is. Because I’ve known Lydia a long time before you did!”

What of it? I don’t really understand a horse’s logic.

Edgar leaned against the elbow rest and rested his chin in his hands.

“What business do you have with Lydia?”

“What business? Didn’t something happen to her? To begin with, why are you not by her side? ... Weren’t you supposed to protect Lydia with your life from now on?”

I don’t need to be told that by a Kelpie.

But Edgar, being unable to save Lydia on his own, had no choice but to entrust Lydia to Fergus from the McKeels.

Suppressing his irate and frustrated feelings, Edgar looked upon Kelpie coldly.

“You asked if ‘something happened’; what makes you think so?”

“There’s no one at her home so I made that Coblynau investigate into the whereabouts of Lydia’s moonstone. Though I have had to run around the islands in this area.”

Kelpie groped about the back of his own hair and picked up something to show Edgar, but Edgar couldn’t see anything.

“Tsk, it passed out.”

With that Kelpie looked like he placed something on the table and jabbed it lightly. It made a slight groan but still appeared to be exhausted.

Edgar couldn’t see the form of Coblynau; he could only hear its voice. Even so, when Edgar thought about how a small fairy was flung about while grabbing on to Kelpie’s mane, Edgar felt sorry for it.

“How pitiful. You’re truly rough.”

As if he thought it was irrelevant, Kelpie peered into Edgar’s eyes.

“Earl, you’re holding on to that moonstone ring aren’t you. Yet Lydia isn’t here. Does that mean that your engagement is dissolved?”

“Don’t talk nonsense. Even without a symbol like a ring, the two of us are already bonded together in our hearts. There’s no space for you to come in between.”

“In your hearts? Really? You kept quiet about having inherited Prince’s memories from Lydia didn’t you?”

“... She already knows. Even so, she said that she’ll marry me.”

I wonder if Lydia still feels that way even now

. At that time, it could be precisely because she felt that she did not have long to live and that may be why she thought that way.

“Rather than that, Kelpie, why did you come? Even though I had spared you some of my precious time because you looked like you had something new to say, did you just come because you wanted to see Lydia?”

Frowning, Kelpie looked as though he was trying to recall his business here. He walked around the room slowly and then leaned against the window.

“Earl, you made an enemy of the Fir Chlis of the Hebrides didn’t you? And because of that Lydia received a blow from their blade. The islands here are a

special place even in the Highlands. You'll suffer if you underestimate the power of fairies."

"You're awfully well-informed of the happenings on our side. Oh yes, you used to help Ulysses before didn't you?"

Ulysses, the aide to the previous Prince, was now probably leading the Organization, which no longer have Prince.

In any case, Ulysses wants to turn Edgar into Prince completely.

"It's not that I helped that guy. I always act with Lydia's interests in mind."

"Meaning if they'll give you information, you don't mind coming into contact with them?"

"As things are now, it's easier to understand their organization. Even though you are Prince and so their boss, you view Ulysses with hostility. Yet despite that, you are getting closer to Prince, just as they want."

"Did you come to lecture me?"

"That's right. Don't think of getting the medicine to cure Lydia of the Fir Chlis' magic while thinking that it's for her sake. That again is exactly what Ulysses wants."

Things had taken an unexpected turn. Edgar thought while observing Kelpie carefully.

Most likely, this horse knows what Edgar wants to know.

“... Because I’ll need the magic of the Unseelie Courts in order to approach the ‘Master of the Islands’?”

If it’s what Ulysses hopes for then that must be it. Edgar asked in order to try and trick Kelpie into confirming that.

“Yeah, that guy Ulysses is scheming because if it’s you, you’ll be able to mobilize those Blue Men of the Minch, couldn’t you? If it’s the ship of those Blue Men, you’ll be able to get close to the origin of the Master’s dream.”

“And so, I’ll get closer to becoming Prince, huh.”

“If you understand that, then don’t yield to Ulysses’ temptation.”

“I see, so that’s what it is.”

Edgar smiled.

“You see?”

“The Blue Men right? If I make use of them, I’ll be able to obtain the medicine for Lydia. You told me something useful, Kelpie.”

Dumbstruck, Kelpie opened his eyes wide.

“... You didn’t know?”

“Yeah, I was troubled at the complete lack of information.”

“Weren’t you instigated by Ulysses’ underlings?”

“I haven’t seen Ulysses nor his Black Hounds. They probably don’t know my whereabouts.”

Crap, spat out Kelpie.

“That woman... she made use of me? What exactly is she thinking? Seriously!”

“Woman?”

“Oi, take it that you didn’t hear about the Blue Men.”

“There’s no way I can do that. So, what are the Blue Men?”

“As if I can tell you! I’ll make you forget everything!”

When Kelpie stretched his hand out to try and grab Edgar by his collar, Raven wedged himself in between and thrust a knife towards Kelpie.

Although there was no way a human weapon could harm Kelpie, it appeared that Kelpie was wary towards the foreign sprite that resided within Raven. It seemed that he decided to withdraw for the time being.

“... This is why humans cannot be trusted. Urgh, I don’t want to care anymore! I wonder why Lydia would trust someone like you.”

Edgar stood up from his seat slowly.

“Raven, let’s investigate into the Blue Men.”

“Yes.”

Raven took the hat and cane and handed it to Edgar.

“Oi Earl, this time you really need to quit. Even if it’s Lydia we’re talking about, she’ll definitely give up on you.”

“There’s no guarantee that her feelings won’t change even if I don’t do anything, won’t it?”

“For me, I intended to respect Lydia’s feelings. But if there’s a possibility that you’ll end up being swallowed up by Prince, then I can’t hand Lydia over to you.”

Kelpie said that to provoke Edgar.

Raven opened the door while remaining silent.

“Kelpie, there’s no way I can get away from Prince. If so, I can only fight him. I have no choice but to face the Prince inside me, the Prophet who is Prince’s enemy, as well as the magic and mystery of these islands that are the reasons behind all these.”

Saying just that, Edgar exited the room.

Chapter 3: Wanting to see you

Lydia walked by the sea.

Shining under the moonlight, the white sandy beach appeared before her. It seemed to be an endless stretch of a single road.

The sea twinkled, even so much that it felt like it was flowing through the whole starry galaxy, and seemingly pouring into the sea from a distant horizon.

Why am I walking in this kind of place? When did I come here?

Lydia knew nothing and merely continued walking forward.

By the time she noticed, she found that she had always been watching an island floating on the sea. It wasn't known whether it was due to the shining moonlight, but there was a hazy green light surrounding that island.

"Hey, where are you going?"

Having heard the sound, Lydia stopped walking. Just when she turned around and thought she couldn't see anyone, a young boy was standing by the seaside.

He was around ten years old. There was a child alone in such a place.

The boy's nose bridge and eye contours were quite deep, his ears were protruding from beneath his black hair; rather than saying he was human, it was better to say that he gave a feeling that he was from another world.

Furthermore, there was no shadow near him.

"You're....not human?"

"You're not either."

Lydia had a look, only to find that she didn't have a shadow at her feet as well. The boy said to Lydia, who was surprised:

"This is a dream, you are sleeping."

"You as well?"

Although he slightly tilted his head, he did not answer the question.

"The dreamland and everything of this world are connected together. This is a world without any boundaries, so you can go wherever you want to. But if you ever lose your way, you will be swallowed up by that island. Because there are huge crystals there that gather dreams."

Using his finger, he pointed to a lone island floating in the sea.

"Where are you going? Think quickly."

"I...."

That's right, I want to go back. I want to return to London. No, I want to go back to Edgar's side.

The moment Lydia thought that, she arrived at a room.

It was unknown where this place was. This room could clearly be seen anywhere, and it had no decorations.

The windows were open, the curtains swayed with the breeze.

The moonlight shone through the window, the sea could vaguely be seen

from the other window as well as the pale green jewel-like color of the island.

Lydia thought that the small island was like a chrysoprase. Her father had told her that it belonged to the agate category.

The chrysoprase on the archipelago were formed by the crystallization of dreams?

Just when Lydia absentmindedly pondered over these matters, she discovered something swaying in the corner of the room and then turned towards it.

There was a sofa in the room, with someone was sleeping on it. A book was spread out on his chest, apparently he was weary enough to fall asleep.

Edgar....?

Lydia felt surprised and because she wanted to confirm whether it was truly him, she slowly approached the sofa.

His blonde hair seemed to be the same color as the moonlight, and his side profile looked proper. He was not wearing a coat, his beautiful collarbone was fully exposed from his opened lapel. Lydia felt confused, then carefully stared at him.

His long eyelashes cast a faint shadow on his cheek.

When Lydia bent down to touch his silk- like blonde hair, he slowly opened his eyes.

His profound ash-mauve eyes captured Lydia.

To be met with surprised but fervent eyes that stared straight at her, Lydia suddenly blushed and wanted to hide.

“Are you..... Lydia?”

He sat up and extended his hand towards her.

Lydia’s hand was held, and a familiar temperature covered her fingers.

He pulled Lydia’s hand towards him and left a kiss on her fingertips.

Currently, Lydia wasn’t really here, Edgar was also a figure of the dream, but because she felt that they were touching each other, her heart raced incessantly.

“....Am I dreaming?”

He spoke with a confused face, helping Lydia sit down beside him.

“I seem to be dreaming too.”

His face was too close to hers, and Lydia couldn’t help but look down.

“I really wanted to see you. It was fine even if it was in my dreams, I prayed every night to be able to see you.”

Edgar’s hands touched Lydia’s ears and covered her face with both hands, wanting to take a look at her more carefully.

“Did you think of me?”

“How could I not? What about you? Do you hate me?”

Lydia shook her head.

Edgar smiled as his lips covered Lydia's.

Lydia felt slightly hesitant, because she recalled that Fergus had embraced her just a moment ago and made a confession.

Because Fergus wasn't a loathsome person, Lydia did not want him to behave in a way that crossed the line. She hoped that he'd soon be able to consider her as Edgar's fiancée and show respect for that, so she felt very upset.

Although it was merely a trivial matter, it was as if she were harboring a secret from Edgar, it made her feel guilty and so she felt somewhat afraid.

I haven't changed, right? Could I accept his feelings like I did before?

Her body stiffened, and Edgar immediately moved his lips away.

“But, you're a little angry, aren't you? It's just like before the engagement.”

“That's not it..... it's only because I haven't seen you for a very long time.”

“Did you forget how to kiss? Then, I will slowly teach you again.”

This was the usual Edgar who liked to joke around, but in doing so, it brushed away Lydia's bewilderment.

Being gently embraced by him, Lydia felt very relieved, the tension having finally been lifted.

Regardless of it was herself or him who hadn't changed, their feelings could be communicated to each other. After all the trouble she thought so.

He kissed Lydia once again, as if he discovered her feelings.

In order not to frighten Lydia, he repeatedly left gentle kisses that barely touched her lips; he wasn't this gentle and cautious even before the engagement.

It was so gentle that it made her sad.

Although it was a dream, they finally met face to face. She was afraid that she couldn't convey her true feelings for him to know.

Using all her strength, Lydia extended her hand as if she were acting like a spoiled child.

When she reached her arm around Edgar's back, her waist was forcibly pulled towards him.

She was tightly embraced so much that it surprised her. Just when Lydia felt hesitant in suddenly changing with a passionate approach, they collapsed on top of the sofa.

She had forgotten. Edgar's desired behavior like that of lovers was more intimate compared to what Lydia wanted.

He staring at Lydia from above, then as if to appease her, he stroked her hair.

“Now that we are in a dream, will you let me go a step further?”

“What....? A step further....?”

The buttons behind her back were unknowingly undone, and his lips traced along the her loosened collar.

It was clearly a dream, why could she sense it so clearly? Lydia felt a slight pain along with the heat on her neck, and couldn't help but turn her body.

“Edgar... what did you do?”

He moved his head up and smiled earnestly.

“Let's hurry up and get married. As I thought, I cannot wait for years... I will definitely come and get you.”

This sentence made her realize something.

She recalled the matter that she was pondering over before she saw Edgar.

Ah, I cannot see him.

Even if it was a dream, I cannot come and see him.

It's because I thought to myself that it would be nice even if I could see him once more that things became like this.

As if to prevent him from dropping a kiss on her forehead, Lydia murmured,

"Let's break up."

He stopped moving and stared at Lydia.

"Why? Did something happen?"

"Nothing, I just thought about it carefully."

He sat up and brushed up his blonde hair, with his expression fairly distressed.

Lydia maintained a distance where she could talk with him calmly and sat upright.

"Because I lied and abandoned you?"

"It's not that."

She needed to convince Edgar. She couldn't let him get close to the Unseelie Courts and do things like obtain the medicine from the 'Master of the Islands'"

Lydia pondered about it carefully, thinking of what to say next.

"You courted and proposed to me, so I seem to have feverishly gotten carried away because I did not understand love very well. I've always thought that to be desired and becoming happy seemed to be love. But no matter how much time has passed, I'm still nervous when I'm by your side and as I expected, I think we're not compatible with each other."

No, it is because I love you that I can't be calm.

Whenever Edgar stared at her, her heart couldn't help but race, so she felt afraid, not knowing whether or not she could truly be so happy.

Despite denying what she said herself, Lydia still exerted much effort in telling a lie.

"I don't believe you."

Edgar said firmly.

".....What did that guy do to you?"

For him to say that, this ought to be the most likely reason for Lydia to mention breaking up.

"It's not..."

"Lydia, I tell you, no matter what despicable things that guy tries to do, my feelings for you will not change, we practically have no reason to break up."

"It's not because of Fergus!"

Lydia unconsciously raised her voice.

It was possible that the one making Edgar lose his rationality was Lydia.

Simply making him hate her will be best. Lydia took upon this idea and said,

"I'm not that kind of earnest girl. It's just that I slightly feel that Fergus is a good man, it's unclear to me whether or not I really like him."

As if he was angry, Edgar grabbed onto Lydia's shoulders.

"What a foolish thing to say, you needed to be cured alone, so even if you wanted to rely on that man, it's not surprising, but if you come back to me, you will forget immediately..... I'll make you forget him."

Lydia nearly wanted to relax her strength, but pulled herself together and waved his hands away.

"..... I definitely won't forget, although he is clumsy and doesn't know how to please women, he is very sincere... even though he's different than you, I can talk to him with ease."

Even Lydia felt doubtful in saying such things. But perhaps because she was in a dream, she was more calm than her real self.

Seeing Edgar frown as if he were hurt, Lydia felt pain in her chest.

She really wanted to say it was all a lie, but it was the only way to stop him.

"Surely you know how much I love you?"

"I'm sorry, but..."

"I don't want to break up. I will definitely bring you back to my side..... If I had known that there was medicine earlier, I wouldn't have had to hand you over to that man."

"Edgar, I don't need that medicine."

"I will get my hands on it for you."

Edgar extended his hand towards her again, but it already had been unable to come across Lydia.

Edgar's figure and the surrounding scenery seemed to blur, surely he couldn't see Lydia's figure either.

The dreamland that connected everything together was vanishing.

"I beg you, please forget me and don't take any more risks."

“Since you’re worrying about me, then Lydia, saying that you want to break up isn’t your true intention, is it?”

I don’t believe it.

His whisper still remained in her ears, and Edgar’s appearance disappeared before Lydia as her surroundings became dark.

Having suddenly become alone, Lydia couldn’t help but cry.

She held back tears, while walking slowly and aimlessly.

Why she was still in a dream? She suddenly came to a point and discovered that it was because she didn’t want to wake up.

“Lydia, what are you doing!”

Lydia stopped in her tracks and Kelpie, who had transformed into a young man, appeared before her.

Although her surroundings were pitch-black, she could clearly see him.

“Hurry and return to your body, if a soul keeps wandering around, you won’t be able to go back.”

“Kelpie, why are you here?”

“I sensed your presence appear at the Earl’s side, so I came over, did you see that guy in the dream?”

"I'm not going to see him again."

Despite him frowning in surprise, he immediately understood and nodded.

"Is that so? Did you get injured by the Aurora fairy's blade? Because of that, that guy is acting like this? But to break up with the Earl who will turn into Prince is the right choice."

Lydia jolted in fright, so she asked Kelpie.

"Kelpie, you knew? How did you know that Edgar received Prince's memories?"

"Well, because I saw it."

"Saw?"

"Well, when the Earl got Prince's memories, I was there at the time too."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

Lydia couldn't help saying this in a condemning tone to Kelpie.

"The Earl was bent on saving you, so whether I should or shouldn't tell you was up to that guy to decide."

Ever since Lydia decided to be engaged with Edgar, Kelpie had acknowledged Edgar more compared to previously. Lydia guessed that this was because Kelpie decided to respect her will.

However, perhaps it wasn't just that. When Edgar stirred up a decisive battle against the Prince, Kelpie was nearby on the sidelines, so only then would he respect Edgar's choice.

The matter of Edgar having inherited Prince's memories, it seems that Kelpie must have also felt that there was no other alternative.

In other words, it was a necessary action in order to save Lydia.....

"It was for me that Edgar approached the Prince?"

Lydia was in a panic.

"Such an important matter, why....?"

Beginning from that time, Edgar had made dangerous choices. If burying the Prophet in the sacred land was for Lydia, then approaching the 'Master of the Islands' to remove the Aurora fairies' magic was also for Lydia.

"Lydia, even if it's like this, you don't need to feel like you owe him a reason, do you? That guy got you involved in dangerous things from the very beginning....."

At that moment, Lydia was unwilling to listen to Kelpie, and so she rushed out.

"Ah, hey, where are you going? Wait! Didn't I say that you won't be able to return!"

Lydia thought to herself that not returning didn't matter.

I might as well disappear.

So that Edgar won't set foot on the wrong path once again

.

"Lydia!"

She suddenly couldn't hear Kelpie's voice. Turning around and looking back,

his figure disappeared.

Lydia sought to be alone in the dark again.

Perhaps she really won't be able to return. Although she thought that, she was not afraid.

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Edgar who was on the couch, opened his eyes.

The morning sunshine came in through the windows.

He held out his hands, seemingly wanting to embrace the dream from just a moment ago. He couldn't feel anything in the air mixed with the morning sun, so he felt empty.

"Lydia... did you come here?"

He hoped it was only a dream. He didn't want to view Lydia's breakup request as sincere.

However, the dream was too vivid, whether or not he came across Lydia's feelings or her response, everything seemed real as they remained in his memories.

"Lord Edgar, have you been resting on the couch?"

Raven opened the door and appeared astonished as his mouth was open.

Edgar sat up and lifted his messy bangs.

"Uh... when I was looking up information, I fell asleep."

The things piled up on the table were documents on magic literature written in English. This was borrowed from the shaman's home yesterday.

If one wanted to approach the 'Master of the Islands', it seemed to be difficult to accomplish without the aid of the Blue Men of the Minch's power. Edgar, who heard this matter from Kelpie, went to visit the shaman's house once again in order to get more advice.

But he did not see the shaman.
She wasn't really home.

An hour or two before Edgar paid a visit, the field at the front of the house was carefully arranged, the buildings and rooms were also very tidy, but now the appearance had completely changed.

The field was barren, one would know that the room was empty at first glance, and upon opening the door knob of the broken door, only dust and cobwebs could be seen.

Later, he learned from a bar owner that the shaman died three years ago.

What exactly did he see in the end?

Moreover, the boy who had guided him to the shaman's home before did not seem to be of this world either.

He was really confused. But Edgar vaguely sensed that the boy who lead him to meet with the already dead shaman may be him.

In result, Edgar could no longer get advice from the shaman, and had no choice but to borrow the books from her home.

However, Edgar did not see relevant records of the archipelago that he wanted to know about.

“Raven, you’ve been to the Inner Hebrides already? You’ve returned really early, did you not sleep?”

On top of this island there was only a small village. There were very few people who understood English, so they were unable to obtain decent information. For this reason, Raven left for the Connaught home in the Hebrides, but he returned earlier than expected.

“I slept on the boat.”

That was not a proper rest, he clearly told him to come back before noon.

Raven had recently begun to do things on his own and no longer followed Edgar’s instructions.

For Raven, this was proof that he was growing up. For Edgar it was an aspect worthy to be happy about but.....

“You don’t have to force yourself.”

“It’s no problem.”

“Oh that’s right, have you gathered any information?”

“In this strait, the legend of the Blue Men of the Minch seems to be well-known and passed down from the olden days. I heard that the Blue Men of the Minch sank ships that went back and forth between islands, moreover, the humans that were taken away became their slaves forever. They usually live in

the grottos of the seabed, and when it was bad weather, they'd float between the waves and steer an old boat towards humans."

"I recall that if it's the Blue Men of the Minchs' ship, we may be able to arrive at the 'Master of the Islands.' In other words, as long as we force our way in that boat it'll be fine....."

However, how were they going to do it?

It was said that they were to appear in times of bad weather, but if they were to set sail at that time and not see the Blue Men of the Minch, then they will sink to the bottom of the ocean.

"What about the 'Master of the Islands?' Do you know of any new information?"

"No one in the Connaught clan knows of detailed information, they only remembered they once made an offering to the sea."

Edgar listened while pondering with his hands crossed over his chest.

"I don't know whether it has anything to do with the Blue Men of the Minch."

"Blue Men of the Minch are generally Unseelie Courts. Although there were rumors that they were the souls of pirates that perished in the strait in ancient times, it was heard that they were like demons. On the other hand, there were no bad impressions about the 'Master of the Islands.'"

Although it wasn't evil, they don't know the true nature of the 'Master.' Despite the minimal information on hand, Edgar got the general direction, and

felt that the Master was the source of the island fairies' magic.

"They told me that only the McKeel family understands these things."

"If we don't ask the McKeel clan, the information will be incomplete regardless."

The Master creates dreams.

When he thought of the old shaman who was already not of this world, a strange image appeared in mind.

It was said that the Blue Men of the Minch that appeared in the caves of the seabeds were strangely shaped objects located within the deep sea, flowing from the cracks of the Master's dreamworld into the human world.

Even if all of it was about to be forgotten, the superstitions of the world still remained fresh on this island.

Only the McKeel clan was aware of it.

Even if something happened when approaching places of the human world or other worlds, it wasn't strange. If that place was the archipelago, there was no doubt that the Lydia who appeared in the dream was truly Lydia.

Even if it wasn't originally intended, Edgar firmly believed that she was in front of him just a moment ago.

She said that she didn't want the medicine, she had also already intended on not returning to Edgar's side.

I don't believe her.

As long as he grabbed hold of that medicine, he will be able to bring Lydia back to London.

Even if he forced her....

That way, he should be able to persuade her again.

Regardless of whether it was the repeated kisses or extending her hands hoping to have him, there wasn't the least bit of all that made Edgar feel that her feelings were far away.

I will definitely be able to hold her back.

As long as I act as soon as possible.

"Then again, I don't understand things like fairies and magic, Lydia and Nico aren't here either, I only have the Merrow sword by my side."

This sword that was embedded with a star sapphire was the Earl of Ibrazel's family heirloom and a sword of magic.

"Arrow seems to be completely unaware on matters relating to the islands."

"Arrow", who was the sword's fairy, was also Edgar's servant, but he was merely a fairy that was born not too long ago. Apparently he only seemed to know of the sword, that is, his own magic.

"I don't know whether I should find Mr. Nico and discuss it with him."

It was rare for Raven to speak out his own opinions. Edgar stared at Raven's expressionless face who had anxiously mentioned it briefly, and then pondered.

"If Nico was here, then of course that would be great.... but don't you not know where he is?"

"I will go and find out."

He may have stayed in some area that the McKeel clan possessed on the Outer Hebrides. But Nico was a fairy, visiting villages everywhere, like an ordinary human being, which ought to be useless.

"Raven, do you want to see Nico?"

He tilted his head. The sort of feelings of wanting to see someone, perhaps Raven had never possessed it up until now. Maybe he didn't really understand these kinds of feelings.

"I had a dream."

He spoke out that sentence softly.

"Was the dream about Nico?"

".....Mr. Nico was at a place where there were many fairies, drunkenly dancing and hopping around. But he seemed very lonely, so I couldn't help but call out to him. But I remember the scenery surrounding me that I saw, it was a very distinctive mountain peak."

It was clearly a dream, but Raven appeared to believe that the place truly existed, and that Nico was there.

In other words, Raven also dreamed of heading to where Nico was?

"Is that so.....? But is Nico willing to lend me a hand? He left, but that was because he knew that I became the Prince."

Lydia also said that she wanted to break up. Perhaps Edgar was unable to secretly seal the Prince's memories within his body.

Wanting to get the medicine, perhaps he was referring to that sort of matter. But he did not want to let go of Lydia.

Up until now, Edgar didn't think that he had changed. Although he touched the Prince's memories and gained strength, that was only a matter that appeared when he used the sword, but he was still an ordinary human.

At the corner of his mind, he thought the Prince's memories were simply the memories of someone else, and will not affect him.

Having said that, if he cannot suppress himself in order to fulfill his desires, did this mean that he was already stepping on the path of no return?

He was clearly carrying the "Prince's" schemes of crisis, but he wholeheartedly pondered over how he was going to obtain that medicine.

"Raven, if Nico knows what I'm trying to do, and you ask him for help on my behalf, he may also hate you."

For Raven, having Nico hate him was definitely a sad thing. He frowned slightly, but he immediately cast an unwavering gaze towards Edgar like before.

Compared to friendship, his loyalty took priority. This wasn't because Raven's emotions weren't developed yet, rather as long as he maintained his ego, this was his unchanging nature.

"Please command me, I will definitely bring Mr. Nico."

Edgar, who was in the middle of contemplating, had accidentally looked towards the window, and the shadow of a large ship that would never be seen in this vicinity caught the corner of his eye.

In the middle of the sea, on top of the mast of the ship, the huge Cremona coat of arms was flapping about in the wind.

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There was an isle of the McKeel clan located in the Outer Hebrides; regardless of where it was, the vast sky seemed to be flat, only the southern region had an area with conspicuous and steep mountain peaks.

This mountain peak was a steep rocky area where vegetation couldn't be grown. A dense mass obstructed one's field of vision; it seemed that humans would hardly approach this place, and only fairies were living here.

The wind blowing past between the peaks continuously made strange sounds.

Nico, who had once lived in this sort of place, had now returned here once again.

He stood on the edge of the cliff, shaking his gray tail while surveying the distant sea.

He did not know how Lydia was now.

It was possible that the Earl couldn't take Lydia back with him. If he didn't leave with her, then Nico will hate him.

Despite believing this, as long as he thought of Lydia possibly sinking into feelings of hopelessness, he minded this considerably.

Pondering over Lydia and the Earl's future, he felt that staying by Lydia's side was too painful, so he escaped. But in the end, nothing could disperse away from his mind.

He couldn't leave Lydia. What Nico did after that was going to every place that he knew of where fairies resided, and asking everywhere if anyone had seen the Prophet.

The Prophet wasn't in the sacred land; if he had awakened, he was probably in some other place. If the person he was looking for was in opposition to Edgar, he will cast a shadow over Lydia's future.

He obviously cared and investigated, but he didn't want to think about Lydia, was this not very contradictory?

It was because of this, that even if he returned to the valley where he lived a long time ago before he knew Lydia's mother, Aurora, there was no ease felt in returning home.

Below the precipice, there was a cabin that was about to collapse. For Nico, this was a scenery that he was used to seeing.

A long time ago, there was a traveler who lived there. He was a slightly strange English gentleman in search of meteorites. He insisted on seeing the meteorite fall on this mountain.

Nico unknowingly became familiar with this man. The man addressed Nico as a gentleman and gave him his tie, telling him that only a dignified man could be called a gentleman.

For Nico, who had lived a long time, he had spent a considerable amount of time alone or with other fairies. However, despite having very little contact with humans, that man left a strong impression.

Humans condense their lives to a brief period of time, living brightly and intensely. Fairies did not have those kinds of hidden passionate emotions, so Nico felt shocked.

Although the time with Aurora and Lydia was obviously very brief for him, that time was held in his heart.

But those people will always pass away quickly.

While Nico gazed at the island's unique strong winds that had blown and made the broken house creak, he thought that although the cabin existed longer than the Englishman who used to live there, there would inevitably be a day where it would disappear without a trace too.

“Hey, you probably have business with me, don’t you?”

While there was clearly no one else around, there was a voice.

Nico turned back in surprise, and saw an unfamiliar boy standing before him. Since this valley is unlikely to have human children here, Nico immediately understood that he wasn’t human.

“What are you, a ghost?”

“I am a dream.”

“Whose dream?”

“The ‘Master of the Islands’ dream.”

Nico had also heard of that existence. According to legends, the archipelago of this region developed due to the ‘Master of the Islands’ dream.

It’s just that regardless of what kind of fairy it was, they had not seen the ‘Master’.

“Are you not looking for the Prophet?”

The boy said to Nico, who was pondering.

Nico opened his eyes wide.

“.....Are you the Prophet?”

It was said that the Prophet was sleeping in the sacred land that the McKeel clan protected. Lydia was deceived by Patrick and left for the sacred land as the Prophet’s fiancée. According to the legend the McKeel clan had passed down, as long as the Prophet awakened, he will save the islands from the crisis brought about by Prince.

However, the Prophet wasn’t in the sacred land.

If the Prophet had already awakened, where was he and what was he doing?

If the Prophet truly exists, then Edgar, who inherited the Prince's memories will be his enemy. Lydia may likely be forced to oppose Edgar as the Prophet's fiancée.

For Lydia, the circumstances will be even more difficult for her to bear. If possible, Nico was hoping to find evidence that the Prophet does not exist.

Although he asked fairies he had known in the past, it was to no avail.

Nico nervously lifted his eyes, and the boy smiled at him.

"If you're trying to find the existence who can save the islands, it isn't me, but someone said that if there's a gray cat with a tie looking for the Prophet, they hope that I can answer the gray cat's questions."

"Who was it?"

"Aurora."

It was the name of Lydia's mother. Nico turned to the boy in surprise.

"You know Aurora?"

"Is this the first question? I met her a long time ago. She entered the sacred land and opened the coffin that was placed there."

"The coffin of the sacred land?"

Every nineteen years, the coffin can be opened. The full moon that meets the condition, is said to be an opportunity to awaken the prophet has a cycle of a little more than 18 years. In other words, there was one chance every nineteen years.

If that was true, the coffin in the sacred land was empty because Aurora had already opened it when she had the chance.

“...Then you were at the scene as well?”

“It had been already been a hundred years since someone entered the sacred land, isn’t that so? I was very intrigued, so I followed Aurora inside.”

“Did you also see the Prophet inside the coffin?”

“Should I describe the meeting? I only listened to the message inside the coffin with Aurora.”

“Message? Wasn’t someone in there?”

“No, there were words inside. After all, making future events occur by using words was the Prophet’s ability. The man who left behind a message was the Prophet who entered the sacred land a hundred years ago. He knew several things that would happen to the McKeel clan in the future. He selected among the options that could overcome the calamity and implemented it, however his future descendants had to create the path that forged ahead towards his chosen future.”

“Wait, so you’re saying that although the Prophet said that he will awaken when the crisis comes and then stay in the sacred land, he really wasn’t planning on waking up, and merely said these words in order to convey a message? In order for Aurora’s clan to possess deep fairy blood, the practice of repeated exchanges was indifferently established, but an important person who can save the archipelago doesn’t exist at all, what’s going on?”

“A savior exists. The power that should have been given to the person who was about to become the savior was given to Aurora temporarily. At least so

far, the development of matters is the same future the Prophet had chosen a hundred years ago."

In other words, regarding the McKeel clan women who became the Prophet's fiancée, their duty was to be entrusted some kind of power?

"Originally, Aurora's fiancé was supposed to obtain that power, but she had already married." Furthermore, that person wasn't from the McKeel clan, so perhaps the next one will be different to what the Prophet thinks."

"As long as it's a person of the McKeel clan, they can become the savior regardless of who it is?"

"I don't think so. However, the choice made by the Prophet a hundred years ago was probably that when a woman who received the message and power appeared, her fiancé would be a man with some sort of ability."

It appeared that the boy tried to recall it as he looked into the distance.

"The message that depicted the future was quite ambiguous, explaining the meaning correctly would be exceptionally difficult. Explaining is within the Prophet's ability, but the moment the Prophet conveys a message to someone, the fate of the message will circulate among people, and its meaning will change. So, the Prophet would want to convey the message directly to someone who needs to know the prophecy."

"The woman who opens the coffin will have a shortened lifespan, is this because of the strength that has been entrusted to her?"

Nico recalled that Aurora had died at a young age and couldn't help but close his eyes.

"It isn't caused by the power itself, it's because the top of the coffin, which has sealed ancient powers, grants formidable magic. The person who undoes the magic will have to bear with the power that rebounds no matter what."

Why would Aurora prefer to face the dangers and enter the sacred land?

A question suddenly came to mind, making Nico open his eyes.

She eloped with Professor Carlton because she wasn't willing to take the responsibilities of being the Prophet's next "fiancée", but she severed ties from her home island and the McKeel clan, under what circumstances did she return to the island that Nico didn't know about?

Nineteen years ago. Yes, it was at that time.

"Um, did Aurora mention a baby?"

"Yes, she carried a baby, a girl named Lydia."

As expected,

Nico thought. It was that time where an exchange was happening.

If Aurora had returned to the island, it was definitely when Lydia taken away as a changeling by half-fairy relatives.

Nico knew that she wanted to bring Lydia back by any means, but she still went as far as to enter the sacred land and open the coffin.

".....But, why did she particularly enter the sacred land to open the coffin after bringing Lydia back?"

“Because if the coffin in the sacred land is opened, there would no longer be the need for exchanges. The McKeel clan’s half fairies were originally chasing after Aurora, but they were also forced to give up and leave. However, she changed the Prophet’s selected path. No, did the Prophet already know that it would become like this? Just because she didn’t know what the outcome will be, Aurora had kept the matter of opening the coffin to herself.”

Living in the fairy realm, half-fairies had been exchanged until now, perhaps apart from some of the members, the rest of them knew that Aurora was the only one who refused the exchange. And they did not inform the main branch of the McKeel clan of anything.

Nico sighed.

Aurora was originally healthy, but because of the magic’s effects, she slowly became ill.

Despite this, she had spent those years always laughing with Lydia and Professor Carlton.

That was certainly a very joyful time.

“So you’re saying that the savior doesn’t exist as expected? Aurora’s husband wasn’t able to become the savior, and her original fiancé ought to have died by now.”

“The other members of the McKeel clan were unlikely to become the savior as well. As long as they can inherit the ancient magic that was placed on the coffin, it may be possible.”

“.....The magic that you spoke of, was that the power that was entrusted to

Aurora?”

However, that sort of awful thing, could it be that Aurora didn't abandon it immediately?

“Yes, that is a bloodstone. Legends from long ago say that the sleeping Prophet in the sacred land will awaken when the McKeel clan is facing a crisis, this was passed down for a long time. The truth about this legend is the magic bloodstone. The Prophet also knew this a hundred years ago, if someone with the ability to inherit magic had touched it, the stone will be a faint green.”

Nico twitched his whiskers.

Having said that, Aurora really did possess a bloodstone. She handed the bloodstone like leaving behind a keepsake.

Could it be that this was the ancient magic.....?

Nico, who knew nothing at all, placed the stone on Aurora's grave, but Lydia picked it up and returned it to him. In that case, since Lydia had touched the stone and there was no change, it meant that it was impossible for her to become the Prophet, but because of other reasons, Nico felt cold sweat all over his body.

Because he lost the stone again. This time, he didn't know where the stone fell, but he didn't try to find it because he was planning to throw it away to begin with.

“The bloodstone..... what happens if you were to lose it?”

He asked, panic-stricken.

“Did Aurora hide it somewhere and then passed away?”

“Uh... that, umm...”

“That sort of enchanted item, sooner or later, it will be handed over to someone suitable. I just don’t know whether there will be enough time to save the islands.”

What did Aurora want Nico to do with the stone?

Aurora wanted to cut off Lydia’s connections to the McKeel clan, she also wanted Lydia to have the happiness of ordinary people.

Rather than throwing it away, it was better for Nico as a fairy to hold onto it, as it was also difficult to hand it over to human hands.

The reason why she asked the boy to say the truth when Nico was looking for the Prophet must have been because she was taking Lydia’s future into account.

But Nico lost the bloodstone.

Perhaps he was already unable to do anything for Lydia.

“Alright, we’re almost there.”

The boy said this, his figure faded as if he was going to disappear.

“I am the dream the ‘Master’ sees, so I have been floating in mind, and will disappear. I cannot stay in the same place for a long time.”

His figure disappeared before Nico could nod. Only the voice that rode the wind reached Nico's ears in the end.

“.....Ah, that's right, Lydia got lost.....”

What, Lydia? Where was she?

Nico looked around, and then quickly leapt into the crack leading into a different world, which was invisible to the human eyes.

It was true, she was wandering around in another world alone.

Regarding the fairy realm of this island, the range was much deeper and broader compared to Lydia's hometown or London, even Nico wasn't able to go through many places.

Now was not the time to leisurely say that she was “really looking for trouble”.

It would be good if she was still near the border.

Even if he was familiar with humans and became close with them, he wouldn't be able to see them after a short while. Nico was fully aware of this, but if he couldn't see them, then it was as if a cold wind blew through his heart.

If it was like with fairies, even if they didn't meet for centuries, as long as they think that they only left yesterday and could see each other again, then the loneliness would also lessen. So Nico thought of the years of Lydia's life, being separated from her shouldn't be so upsetting.

However, he did not know when humans will suddenly disappear.

While Nico was anxious, he entered the border of the dream's territory between the human world and the fairy realm, raising his whiskers that stood on end, to seek Lydia's presence.

"Lydia, what are you doing?!"

Lydia was squatting in the darkness and having suddenly heard a sound, she looked up in surprise.

"You're clearly a fairy doctor..... didn't I tell you every time to pay attention before you get lost!?"

"Is it..... Nico?"

With a careful gaze, a figure vaguely emerging, appeared before her eyes. She could see a fluffy gray haired cat running with all its effort toward here.

Lydia stood up and immediately ran forward.

Lydia stretched her hands, and Nico jumped towards her. Lydia closely held Nico, who had jumped to her, he also used his short paw to wrap around her neck and grab onto her.

"Lydia, ahh, it's good that I've found you."

"Nico....where have you been?! Why did you leave me alone? I thought I'd never see you again..."

She clung to Nico and rubbed her cheek against his soft fur.

This was the first time he wasn't angry at this treatment, but the familiar touch made her feel relieved.

When her heart was hurt and she wandered alone, perhaps at the bottom of her heart she hoped for Nico, who was both family and a close friend, to be by her side. While she had those feelings, her face was buried deep into his gray fur.

"Have you been well? I honestly can't watch you suffer."

Nico finally lifted his head, and appeared to have tears in his eyes. Lydia had of course, was crying but when she saw Nico she couldn't help breaking into a smile.

"Nico, thank you... today, even if your fur is messy you didn't get angry."

Having heard this, Nico suddenly remembered this and jumped out of Lydia's arms.

He stood on his hind feet, hastily straightened out his fur and bow tie. He then narrowed his eyes nonchalantly, and as if putting on an act, he put his hands on his hips.

"Th--this isn't important, Lydia, what's going on with you? Did something happen?"

When Nico asked, Lydia remembered Edgar and sadly sat on the ground once more.

"I broke up with Edgar."

Nico was not particularly surprised, and seemed to think that it was better this way. He merely placed his paw on Lydia's head to comfort her.

"Hey, Nico... where were you just now?"

"On the mountain."

"Can I live there too?"

"Don't be ridiculous. Lydia, you left your own body now, did you not?"

"Can I become a fairy like this?"

"That's impossible, your human blood is too strong. If you don't turn back immediately, you won't be able to return."

Lydia believed that it did not matter to her, and that she'd wander aimlessly.

".....I don't want to go back."

If she were to wake up, she would be aware that she was truly separated from Edgar. She definitely wouldn't understand why she was staying on this strange land to focus on treatment in the end.

She would seemingly sink into despair and she was afraid of this.

"You clearly don't want to be separated from the Earl, yet you broke up with him?"

"Because Edgar became the Prince for my sake. Moreover, even if he had to use Unseelie Court magic again, and also think about obtaining the secret medicine to treat the wound caused by the Aurora fairy...."

Nico let out a sigh.

"The Earl cannot wait three years."

"What am I going to do Nico.....? What should I do?"

"Oh my, at any rate, let's return first."

Nico appeared to think it was troublesome as he said that.

Although he was Lydia's good friend, he was a heartless guy who was unsuited to discuss these things even from before.

Because he was an inconsiderate partner, Lydia also began to speak firmly.

"No, I won't go back."

"Then I'm going."

Nico turned his back towards her.

Seeming like Lydia would be abandoned, she stood up without thinking.

Nico looked over his shoulder and held out his paw towards her.

"Good grief, you're an adult now, but you're still the same as when you were young."

She would get lost in the fairy realm after her mother scolded her, and although she'd say that she didn't want to go back, she didn't want to be abandoned by Nico, who came to pick her up. As a result, she was always following behind him in the end.

When Lydia who had grown taller held Nico's paw, it seemed like she was lifting him up. Even so, Nico still took on the attitude of a guardian, he held

Lydia's hand and walked a step ahead of her.

Like in the past when she walked with Nico, Lydia gradually calmed down.

I also have a precious family, that is, Nico and Father.

Even if she broke up, how could she sink into despair?

By the time Lydia noticed, she had already stepped onto ground.

The surroundings weren't dark, and the moon was suspended in the night sky. They were behind the layered mountain.

"Hey hey, that guy seemed worried about you, so he ran to this kind of remote place."

Nico said, then pointed ahead as a pitch-black horse stood up in the plains.

It was Kelpie.

"Lydia, I was looking for you for a long time! You suddenly ran away in the dream recklessly, I was really worried about you."

He said, and ran over.

"Now is not the time to be walking with a cat. Where is your body? Hurry up and go!"

Lydia was suddenly floated up, and as soon as she realized that, she was already sitting on Kelpie's back. Naturally, Lydia tightly held onto Nico as well.

“Hey, do I have to go too?!”

Stay by my side for a little longer.

Lydia thought that, as she rested her face against his soft fur. Nico wrapped his arrogant tail around Lydia’s hand, appearing to have given up.

Chapter 4: The ghost ship of the Blue Men

The Grand Duke of Cremona's ship was a Dutch patrol warship sold to the common people. Although it was a small ship, it couldn't get any closer to the small island's pier, which only accommodated fishing boats.

So, the ship could only be docked in the middle of the sea and a small boat lowered from there. The islanders didn't know what was happening, so they were all gathered at the beach to watch what was going on.

Edgar, who came out of the inn with Raven, stood in the sparse crowd and looked at the figure of the ship, which was fairly sturdy for an aristocrat's passenger ship.

"Is that Miss Lota?"

Raven kept his sight on the small boat that was docking on the plain pier built on the shore, and saw a woman coming down from the boat.

Whether it was the hair that was bundled into a ponytail or the rough way that she ran, that person was definitely the Princess of Cremona -- Lota.

"Edgar! I came to see you!"

Lota noticed the two of them and ran towards them with a happy look on her face for some reason.

Edgar calmly retreated behind Raven.

Lota ran towards them with opened arms and as a result was unable to stop. No, perhaps she didn't intend to stop and so she hugged Raven in this way.

“Hey Raven, it’s nice to see you in good spirits.”

Raven’s whole body turned stiff and could only slightly turn his head towards Edgar to say:

“Lord Edgar..... please run while you still can.”

“Huh? What do you mean, don’t describe my friendliness as if it was an attack!”

“No matter how you think about it, it’s a disturbing attack. It’s about time that you should let go of Raven, he is too pitiful.”

Although Lota complied, she suddenly walked towards Edgar, thus Raven stood in between them once again.

Lota looked over Raven’s shoulder and glared at Edgar.

“If that is the case then Edgar, you should accept my embrace.”

“I only want to be embraced by a woman.”

“I am a woman!”

“That might be the case, but even you wouldn’t acknowledge a slob as a man.”

“What.....?”

“Hey, everyone calm down first.....”

A voice without tension came from behind. Paul's face looked very confused and he scratched his unkempt curly hair whilst walking towards them.

"Paul, you came as well?"

"Yes, Lota asked me to come with her.... because you never came back, I was very concerned about you."

He said this very apologetically.

Seeing Paul like this, Edgar felt incredibly reassured.

Edgar, who was staying in the Hebrides islands, was an enemy of the McKeel clan, and because he possessed the Prince's identity, he was being targeted. Not only that, the presence of fairies could be felt stronger on these islands in comparison to other places. Even Edgar, who didn't possess special abilities like Lydia, seemed to think that he could see beings that weren't human due to the negative effects of the Prince's memories, and thus, lost sense of reality.

Was he even still an ordinary human? Was he getting closer to becoming the Prince of Unseelie Courts? He almost couldn't tell the difference and felt confused.

He also thought that the reason Lydia proposed a break up was perhaps because she was afraid of the changes in Edgar which he couldn't sense himself.

But when Paul appeared before him, he was able to think that he hadn't changed at all. So long as Paul could look at him kindly, he could believe that he was still Earl Ashenbert, the same as before.

"Thank you, I'm so glad to see you."

Edgar grinned and gently put his hand on Paul's shoulder.

"Earl...this is great, I was worried that something happened to you."

"I apologize, I couldn't contact you."

"No, I was wondering if I was meddling, but it would be great if there's anything that I could help out with..... I asked Mr. Tomkins where you were, and came over."

Paul's expression finally relaxed. Perhaps he no longer minded the incident where Edgar had tried to put some distance between them.

Of course for Edgar, he still didn't want to involve Paul in this matter even more, because the one who murdered his father was 'Prince's' organization.

However, Paul was innocently worrying about him as a friend now, and this made him feel thankful.

"Hey, where is Lydia?"

Lota looked around. Knowing that there were only ordinary passengers on the ship, the villagers dispersed from the shore. Of course there was no sign of Lydia here, so she couldn't help but tilt her head.

"She isn't here."

"Why, didn't the two of you go to Lydia's hometown together?"

Initially it was planned that the wedding ceremony will take place immediately after their return.

In the end, not only were they separated in two different places but Lydia even suggested breaking up.

Did she really fall in love with Fergus? If that was really the case, would a meticulous person like Lydia obediently accept Edgar's kiss?

He thought that even though she was a little nervous compared to the past, she didn't show any sign of reluctance.

But now, even if Edgar wanted to convince Lydia, he couldn't even get close to her.

He could only worry as he struggled, hoping to obtain the medicine.

The only choice left was to find the spring water from the 'Master of the Islands.'"

As Edgar was thinking, he looked over at Lota's ship that was docked at sea.

That ship is quite fine. With that ship, one could sail through the countless waves thrown by the sea.

"Lota, could you lend me your ship?"

Edgar made a decision and said.

"What, why?"

"I want to find the ghost ship."

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As Lydia opened her eyes, she could see the moon hanging by the window. It was the same moon she saw in her dream when she was in the valley with Nico.

Kelly fell asleep in the corner of the room.

Lydia heard a creaking sound coming from the dark room and gently turned around.

She caught sight of someone leaving through the door.

The tartan-patterned cloak gently raised up as they disappeared through the other side of the door.

Fergus?

He went as far as to enter the bedroom without permission.

Despite thinking that, Lydia did not feel angry with him.

In fact, she felt sorry for him.

Because even though Lydia knew of his feelings, she felt that she could no longer love anyone.

She didn't hate Fergus. Even when she was tightly hugged by him, she did not sense any feeling of disgust in her heart.

However, he wasn't like Edgar. Just the thought of him made Lydia's heart feel warm.

Lydia couldn't think of anyone who could disturb her heart like Edgar did, and so she felt that she wouldn't be able to fall in love with anyone else.

Although she wanted to turn around, her body couldn't move flexibly. It seemed that her body had yet to be fully integrated with her consciousness.

Lydia felt tired and closed her eyes again. She would probably be fully awakened by dawn. As she thought about this, she immediately fell into deep slumber. By the time she woke up, it was brightly lit outside the window.

"Miss! You're awake!"

Kelly was looking over her in tears.

"Ahhh what a relief... you lost consciousness for almost the whole day and I thought something happened to you."

"I'm sorry, I made you worry."

Lydia slowly sat up and did not feel uncomfortable.

She turned her gaze and saw a gray cat sleeping on a chair next to the bed. He opened one of his eyes and looked at Lydia without saying anything, probably pretending to be an ordinary cat.

Even so, Nico was still around when she woke up, which made Lydia feel at ease.

"Oh right, Miss, your cat has returned!"

Kelly said happily and suddenly picked up Nico, who was pretending to be asleep.

"He went missing in the Connaught village, right? Actually knowing where Miss' location is.... he truly is an intelligent cat."

"Stop treating me like a cat..... ugh, let go of me."

Nico whispered as he disgruntledly twisted his body, but to Kelly, his voice probably sounded like meowing. Kelly pushed him towards Lydia, as if wanting to let her hug him.

Lydia, who was powerless, had no choice but to take Nico, but he wasn't accepting of it and narrowed his eyes.

Kelly probably thought that Lydia would happily stroke the cat and so she watched from the side with expectant eyes.

In the dream, Even Nico was willing to be held, so it should be alright.

Lydia thought this and planted a kiss on Nico's head.

Meow. He made a strange sound.

"Thank you, Nico."

Nico revealed an expression that seemed to say "you really couldn't help it" and then feeling shy, he quickly jumped out through the window. Lydia watched him leave and then got out of bed to change her clothes.

"I'll put the clothes here."

Kelly's movement was as smooth as ever.

This morning is the same as usual. But when Lydia stood in front of the mirror, she noticed a red mark on her neck.

“I wonder what this is?”

When Lydia reached out to touch it, a weird feeling emerged from her heart as if something even hotter had touched that spot.

She somehow felt her heart beating faster.

Kelly leaned over to have a look and as a result, she got shocked and turned red.

“I, I don’t know either... did you hit something?”

Can you actually hit this area? Moreover, no matter how you think about this, this doesn’t look like a bruise.

Kelly was obviously playing the fool.

“What is this? Please tell me.”

Lydia turned to face Kelly, but she was busy helping Lydia put on her dress and didn’t seem to want to look at Lydia.

As she revealed such attitude, Lydia grew even more concerned.

“Hey Kelly, I ask of you, are you not my ally?”

Kelly quickly dressed Lydia up, but Lydia grabbed her hand to stop her.

She sighed and looked at Lydia, as if she gave up. She carefully selected her words as she explained.

When Lydia vaguely understood it, blood came rushing into her head, making

her feel dizzy.

While asleep, this area was actually kissed by someone. Just thinking about this made her blush.

Lydia remembered the shadow that disappeared behind the doorway last night, and thought that it was definitely him.

Lydia wasn't wary of him since he was a relative and of course, he wasn't a bad person. But why was he so discourteous?

"Ah! Miss!"

Lydia rushed out of the room.

She caught a glimpse of Fergus outside the house. It looked like he was giving water to the horse.

Lydia approached him angrily.

"Lydia, you're awake?"

Fergus was surprised and looked at her happily.

"I'm glad. That guy, Patrick scared me when he said you might never wake up. Ah, are you able to get out of bed now?"

He had an innocent look. Lydia frowned with all her might, looked up at him and said:

"You entered my room in the middle of the night, correct?"

As a result, looking like a child who was caught playing a hoax, he looked away with confusion.

"Well, yes... I apologize, I was a little worried."

"Worried? So you thought that it was alright to kiss me while I was asleep?"

"What did you say?"

Fergus responded like he didn't know anything, and Lydia's anger suddenly calmed down.

"Could it be..... that it wasn't you?"

Lydia couldn't help but press on her neck. She still felt the heat, but a kiss that she didn't want made her unexpectedly made her feel this way. She didn't feel quite right.

"I--it's nothing, forget what I just said."

As Lydia intended to leave, Fergus spoke.

"Was it about that?"

He frowned with displeasure as he stared at Lydia's covered neck.

Nowadays, Lydia wore dresses with tight collars, so he shouldn't have seen the mark on her skin. But he knew that there was a mark on her neck, so he spoke as if it was really him.

"I did it."

Fergus buried his fingers into his red short hair, not knowing why he fretfully made that statement.

".....Sure enough, it was like that. That's going too far, you know that I don't like it!"

"When I saw you sleeping, I just couldn't help it."

Lydia's face turned instantly red and immediately raised her hand.

Even though Lydia's palm hit Fergus' face, he'd stare at Lydia intensely, not minding at all. Lydia couldn't stand his stare, so she turned and fled the scene.

Why? She whispered.

By simply touching the mark on her neck, she could feel a wave of heat.

Why? Don't I only have this kind of feeling towards Edgar?

Lydia was confused.

As a matter of fact, he was in a distant place, and Lydia couldn't even hold his hand, but did her memory of his kiss in her dream switch with what happened in the real world against her will?

Or was she just a superficial girl, who was never satisfied with what she had?

Did she subconsciously think that since she decided to break up with Edgar, there was no harm in falling in love with someone else?

I had clearly fallen in love with the opposite sex for the first time and decided to spend a lifetime with him, but to replace him with someone else, something must be wrong with me.

Lydia blamed herself as she was leaving the mansion and running to the fields.

She finally came to a stop as she reached a white rocky area which could be seen from the mansion.

She didn't want Fergus to come after her, so she didn't intend to go any further and decided to sit on the rock.

She didn't want to regret waking up from the dream.

Will the day come when she will no longer miss Edgar?

Nevertheless, Lydia didn't want to forget Edgar.

It was because she loved him that she decided to break up with him. She didn't want to lose the feeling of being the most important person to him.

That's why she won't fall for anyone else.

Lydia lowered her head while holding her knees. A figure appeared in front of her. She looked up in surprise and saw a young man with curly black hair looking down at her.

"Good, I made it in time."

"Kelpie....."

He rushed over and somehow made Lydia return from the dream.

"That fairy doctor called Patrick is here as well, isn't he? That guy placed various talismans around the mansion, there's no way Unseelie fairies like me can get close, it truly is troublesome."

Kelpie complained as he sat down next to Lydia.

“Then I’ll just make a path that you can use next to my window.”

“I can enter whenever I want?”

“Why do you ask? You used to do that all the time.”

As Lydia tilted her head, Kelpie supported his worried face with his hand.

“I was thinking if you’ve begun to hate Unseelie Courts after arriving at this island. I heard from the cat that the Unseelie Court here have done terrible things. Don’t you possess the bloodline of a fairy doctor that can expel those guys?”

That matter. Lydia changed the topic.

“That has nothing to do with this. Weren’t you willing to become my kelpie?”

“What about the Earl? Even though he has the power to control the magic of the Unseelie Court, he is your fiancé. The matters of this island have nothing to do with you, and yet you decided to break up with him?”

Kelpie stared at her and Lydia turned away from those black pearly eyes.

It doesn’t matter if Edgar is the Prince.

Although Lydia tried to think that way, she was afraid that he might change.

It was because Lydia couldn’t completely believe that he wouldn’t change and therefore, did not want to be the cause of his change and wanted to escape.

“That’s enough, stop mentioning about Edgar.”

Kelpie shut his mouth and gently sighed. As he was trying to change the subject, he suddenly said:

"Hey, you're not gonna thank me?"

"What?"

"You can do the same thing you did to your cat."

Then, as if he was looking forward to it, he looked at Lydia and smiled.

Lydia remembered that she kissed Nico's head because he was worried about her. As she carefully thought about it, Kelpie had also been worrying about her endlessly, and it was also thanks to him that Lydia was able to wake up safely.

"Where did you see that?"

"I didn't see it. Not too long ago that cat was grooming his fur while shouting: 'That Lydia, she actually kissed my head'.....he also seemed to be showing off a very pleased attitude."

That cute and ridiculous appearance made Lydia laugh. She stretched out her hand towards Kelpie's face.

He was quite tall and even when he sat, his head was still above Lydia's line of sight, so Lydia wanted to hold Kelpie and pull him closer. She dropped a kiss near his forehead, which was covered with black curly hair.

Lydia could sense the clear and calm presence of the water. She leaned against Kelpie, put her head on his shoulder and let her body immerse in the feeling of floating in water.

"I see, this somehow feels pleasant."

Kelpie, who said that, did not understand a human's tendency to touch each other, but he still took hold of Lydia's shoulder.

He had only seen the love expressions humans made, and so tried to imitate it. In spite of this, Kelpie felt the warmth which was absent among magical fairies, through Lydia.

It was probably because of this that he had always been staying by Lydia's side.

She wouldn't act like this towards human men again, but Kelpie was a fairy, so he was allowed to touch her. As Lydia thought about this, she sat quietly.

"Hey Kelpie, once my injury is healed, everything will be the same as before. I want to return to the village and live leisurely with the fairies. Rather than getting married, this way you won't be bored, right?"

"For me, I'd rather see you smile than worry about being bored."

"I will be able to laugh.....I definitely will."

"What's wrong with your face?"

Patrick saw Fergus's red cheeks and frowned sympathetically.

"Fergus, although I did say that it was a good opportunity to pursue her, being too anxious will have a counter effect."

Fergus glared angrily at Patrick.

Of course he was aware of that. Fergus thought that it would be fine to spend time with Lydia to slowly get closer to her.

It was all because Patrick said too much that things had become troublesome.

Even the incident that happened shortly before Lydia fainted was caused by Patrick who used the Earl's incident to blame Lydia.

Fergus tried to comfort Lydia who obviously seemed hurt, but he couldn't help but embrace and confess to her.

Besides, the incident of the kiss mark on her neck that turned into Fergus getting a slap in the end was also because of Patrick.

Last night he really did enter her bedroom, and when he stared at Lydia under the moonlight, he noticed a red spot on her neck.

Who on earth was it? He thought desperately.

There were only female servants around Lydia. Kelly certainly wouldn't do such a thing, and it was hard to imagine the maids doing it out of mischief.

The anxious Fergus felt that it was impossible but still pressed Patrick for an answer.

Patrick's answer was very simple.

"It should be Earl Ashenbert."

How was that possible? Fergus said.

Although Edgar was still staying somewhere in Hebrides islands, at the very least, he wasn't anywhere within the McKeel clan's territory.

There were no decent roads in the wilderness, and this wasn't the kind of place that outsiders could find without a guide, so it was impossible to invade the house in the middle of the night.

"They had a lover's rendezvous in their dream."

They are an officially an engaged couple, and describing it as a lover's rendezvous seemed rather strange, but that was Patrick's answer.

"Miss Lydia was probably trapped in her dream and so wasn't able to wake up. If that was the case, then the place that she went to should have been was by the Earl's side."

These words made a person understand but not truly understand.

Even if they did meet in their dream, Lydia was sleeping right here, so how could it be possible to leave such an obvious mark on her body?

"When the heart receives a strong impression, it will affect the body as well."

Was she not disgusted or angry in her dream? Did she put on an expression which Fergus had never seen before when she looked at the Earl?

As soon as Lydia woke up, she rushed angrily to question Fergus. It seemed that it did not occur to her that it was a mark left by the Earl.

In real life, the person who she could reach within an arm's length was Fergus but could he not win against a man whom she could only meet in her dreams?

With frustration, he lied.

He said that he kissed her while Lydia was asleep.

Just by telling the truth, she would feel at ease, and then would she reveal a shy expression that could only be seen by a lover from afar? Fergus didn't want to know such things.

He didn't want to see Lydia's response when she and Edgar were together.

If that was the case, then even the anger didn't matter, as long as he kept the emotion to himself.

He was distraught with anxiety, so even though it turned out this way, he was satisfied.

Patrick wanted Lydia because her blood was useful towards the McKeel clan, but it was different for him. That's what Fergus thought, and it was rare for him to have a rebellious heart towards Patrick, whom he regarded as an elder brother.

"You shouldn't interrupt on every single matter, I have my own way of handling things."

He wouldn't use such clever and calculative ways to pursue Lydia, and he didn't know how to be tactful. What's wrong with facing her wholeheartedly?

"Would you be able handle it?"

"Don't treat me like a child, I'm the one who brought Lydia here."

“The Earl isn’t someone you could deal with using ordinary means. The reason he left Miss Lydia in your hands is because he calculated your usefulness. He definitely intends to immediately take Miss Lydia away one day.”

Patrick was probably right and this made Fergus angry.

Fergus seemed to understand that he couldn’t refute. Revealing an anxious attitude, he turned around to face his back towards Patrick.

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Dark clouds began to pile up in the sky.

The sea seemed to be roaring with waves and the ship shook more violently than before.

Lota hurriedly gave instructions to the ship’s crew and the sails were put away one after another.

The vessel stopped moving forward and was merely beaten around by the waves, floating aimlessly.

“The waves are getting big, are we still going to continue sailing?”

Edgar stood at the deck near the ship’s bow and kept looking ahead. Lota approached him and asked.

“Your ship can’t even withstand these waves and sea breeze?”

“Huh, don’t look down on this. Although the ship is old, it’s strong and the performance is good as well. It has even sailed smoothly through several storms. Merely encountering the bad weather in these straits is nothing at all.”

“Then there’s no problem. I heard that the Blue Men of the Minch will appear in the sea when the big waves rise. This weather is just perfect.”

Edgar said as he stared into the sea.

The clouds covered their field of vision and they couldn’t see the shadow of the islands. Although this area was the straits, it was quite far away from the Inner and Outer Hebrides. It was said that although this was the inner sea, there would frequently be upsurging large waves.

“It seems that Paul’s current state is even more worrying than the ship.”

Lota was pointing towards the rear with her thumb. Paul’s seasickness was so serious that he was grabbing on the handrail of the deck. He was lying in the cabin earlier but probably came out for some fresh air.

“It’s alright, Earl..... I’m fine.....”

Even though he looked pale, he still insisted.

“I’m sorry, please bear with it a little longer. It probably won’t take long.”

Saying that, Edgar sensed a rotten smell mingling in the air since earlier.

Raven said he didn’t sense anything; Lota and crew members did not mention any abnormalities as well.

This is the presence of the Unseelie Courts' magic.

It was something that Edgar knew of from the Prince's memories.

Once upon a time, Prince drank the fairy's essence in order to obtain the Unseelie Courts' magic. Edgar was once again forced to experience this disgusting smell again. He vaguely sensed the same scent in the wind.

Nothing could be seen around the sea, but there was something approaching them.

Black clouds quickly spread to the surroundings, and lightning was striking across the sky.

Large raindrops suddenly started to fall and the tall waves were rocking the ship.

"Is that.....?"

In the depths of the waves in the sea, at the other end of the veil formed by the heavy rainfall was a huge shadow. The shadow was slowly approaching them.

There was something in the faint white light that floating along the sea with the shadow.

"Edgar, don't lean out of the ship! You'll fall into the sea!"

Lota shouted.

"It's the Blue Men of the Minch."

Edgar pointed straight ahead. Although Lota gazed intently, she still tilted her head.

"I don't see anything?"

It seemed only Edgar could see it. In that case, it was most likely that no one saw the huge shadow that was surrounded by pale spirits.

That object had the shape of a ship.

As it came closer, a tattered sail could be seen entangled on a mast-like black pillar, making a noise like it was being beaten by the wind.

However, the entire ship looked like a drawing. It seemed like a dark flat object, and it got bigger as it approached.

Edgar kept his eyes open in the intense rain.

The shadow was close enough to hit Lota's ship, and it was so huge that one needed to raise their head to look upwards. As he thought this, the ship was hit by the shadow and swayed violently.

Lota raised her voice and instructed the crew members. Edgar managed to grasp the handrail as he looked up at the shadow that was surrounding and shaking the ship.

The pale spirits jumped onto the deck. Although they were gathering at a distance, they were encircling Edgar.

"Lord Edgar, please grab the rope!"

Raven threw over a rope and secured the other end to the mast in order to steady his body.

But Edgar did not tie the rope to his body. He steadied his feet as much as he could and stood upright, looking at the shadow of the ghost ship.

“The Blue Men should know who I am, right? This is the place where the contract was made with the Unseelie Courts according to his memories.”

Edgar felt something and it seemed to be approaching him. So, he called out to the Blue Men.

“Listen up, imprisoned pirates, you are all my servants!”

The wind suddenly stopped.

The ship also stopped shaking, but it was only for a moment, and this time, there was a huge wave targeting the deck.

The seawater covered the ship and flushed everything on the ship out to the sea.

Edgar slipped and was washed away as well.

“Lord Edgar!”

Raven stretched out his hand but couldn’t reach him. Instead of grabbing Raven’s hand, Edgar desperately grabbed onto Paul’s coat, so he was also washed away.

“Earl.....”

Paul called out in a weak voice, but in the next moment, they were both

pulled into the sea.

“Hey, Edgar! Paul is being washed away!”

But oddly, Edgar was looking up at Lota’s boat from the sea.

The sea was obviously churning endlessly but he couldn’t feel the waves and he could look through the transparent water to see the conditions of the sea.

Raven leaned out of the deck and looked around to find Edgar.

But this scene gradually disappeared.

Edgar was holding on to Paul, who had lost consciousness, and slowly drifted in the water.

Even though they were in the sea, it was as if they were wrapped in a ball of air. They weren’t soaked with water and furthermore, they weren’t in pain. He was surrounded by spirits with a strange pale flame-like form, and didn’t know whether he was sinking deeper or floating.

When he came to, Edgar was already on board a ship.

The ship was floating in the sea and he was standing on top of it.

The thin moon was floating in the night sky. The sea returned to calmness and gently carried the vessel. Sure enough, his body was not wet. Edgar stared down at Paul who was by his feet and he seemed to be dry as well.

“Paul, are you alright?”

He opened his eyes slightly, then got up and looked around. He had apparently forgotten about his seasickness from earlier and shouted.

“Wh--what’s with this ship!?”

The mast was bent and the broken sails were rolled up on top of it.

There were holes all over the deck and their whole surroundings were covered in seaweed.

The ropes, which were on the verge of rotting, resembled organs twisted into a spiral, and emitted a strange light.

The ship looked like it just came up from the bottom of the sea and was soaking wet everywhere.

“It’s probably the ghost ship.”

As Edgar answered readily, Paul frowned pathetically.

Upon listening carefully, moaning sounds could be heard from the bottom of the ship. A sound similar to a door creaking to a steady rhythm could be heard.

“What is this sound?”

Paul carelessly went to the rotting cavern of the deck and looked down, as a result, he screamed and retreated backwards.

Edgar went over to find out what was happening and the result was depressing.

"I see....this is a paddle ship."

The slaves kept rowing the oars at the bottom of the ship, so even if there were no sails on board, the ship could still move slowly.

"T--that's not the problem....."

What the pale looking Paul probably wanted to say was that the chained up oarsmen were nothing but bones.

"Those should be the men caught by the blue spirits to be used as slaves."

".....Is it possible that will we end up in that way?"

"I don't know. I pray that it would not be so."

In an instant, a large number of figures appeared on the ship.

Pale looking spirits dressed in tattered clothes and holding crescent-shaped knives were surrounding Edgar and Paul.

The thought of having the Merrow's sword by his side flashed through Edgar's mind. The sword's fairy sensed his intention and the star sapphire emitted a bright light.

This sword holds the power to slay fairies. Although the chances are slim facing this many enemies, it should have a deterrent effect.

While he was pondering, a ghost with a tall stature emerged from the group.

(Are you the Prince of Calamity?)

Hearing this, Paul stared at Edgar in surprise.

"No, I'm the Blue Knight Earl."

Edgar answered.

(Blue Knight.....I don't know who that is. But you said we are all your servants and you also mentioned that you were the one who made the contract with the island's Unseelie Courts.)

"That's right, that contract is within me..... Prince is dead and the contract was inherited by me."

"Earl, what's going on.....?"

Paul was confused and looked up at Edgar nervously.

He never thought that Paul would find out like this. But Edgar must protect Paul from the ghosts, therefore, he needed to declare that "Prince's memories" were here.

"I'm sorry, I'll explain later."

Upon saying this, Edgar assumed himself as the leader and glared at the ghost who seemed to be the captain of the dead pirates.

The ghost captain twitched his crooked nose and said:

(I can sense magic, but it is too weak. If you are the human who turned into the Prince of Calamity then show me the evidence.)

Evidence? What should I do?

As Edgar hesitated slightly, the ghost beside the captain waved the knife around.

(If you don't have any evidence then hand over your souls!)

The ghosts came towards them.

“Wah!”

Paul covered his head and screamed as Edgar called out Arrow in a whisper while holding the sword in his hand.

When he waved the sword, the star sapphire on the sword became a ruby.

The red light together with the sword drew out an arc. The moment the sword split the ghost, it let out a high-pitched scream and disappeared without a trace.

The surrounding ghosts were in an uproar and retreated together.

(.....So that's how it is, I've heard of the existence of this sword. Being able to control this sword, it means that you are indeed our Prince.)

If the one who inherited the Blue Knight Earl's bloodline was truly a descendant of the Earl, then of course he would be able to bring out the sword's star ruby power. But that ancient bloodline had been cut off, leaving only the Prince who had this power and survived.

However, even though he obtained this power through Prince's memories, Edgar still intended to maintain his identity as the Blue Knight Earl.

(Prince, what would you like us to do?)

The captain asked. Edgar laid down his sword.

“I want you to take me to the ‘Master of the Islands.’”

The ghosts were excited.

(Then, you want to awaken the Master? The sword might be able to do it.)

Once the Master is awakened, we can be liberated from the dark rocky area. Our decaying bodies are trapped in the rocky area, and we are able to turn into ghosts to invade the human realm only during bad weather. Now we can escape from this fate.)

“If we can be freed, we will be happy to help you curse the human world.”

Edgar did not come here to liberate them. However, it didn’t matter if that was what they thought.

“There’s a spring in the Master’s dreamland, correct? Can you take me there?”

This time, they suddenly looked furious.

(The spring? Ahh that’s right, in order to awaken the Master, we need the magic welled up from the deep spring. But we are unable to go near that place. That is the main source of the Master’s dreamland and it is surrounded by gemstones.)

Was he referring to the gemstones that these pirates wanted to steal before?

(It’s not easy to intrude into that place. Those who are not welcomed will be become imprisoned spirits like us.)

"Just bring me there."

Edgar slightly lit up the sword, and the ghosts vanished from his sight, seemingly returning to their respective duties.

The boat started to sail, as if it was gliding on tranquil sea.

*

Lydia was sitting on Kelpie's back, galloping along the beach. Despite knowing that she couldn't go too far, the feeling of going against the wind was very comforting and helped her forget all the unpleasant things.

It would be great if she could run like this to Edgar's side. She drove this thought out of her head.

The sun was shining down and the clouds moved as if it were rushing.

Kelpie approached the water and started to play by the sea, splashing water all over Lydia.

"Goodness, I'm all wet."

"If that's the case, how about a stroll in the sea?"

It could be done if she followed Kelpie, but Lydia thought it would be better not to.

"Rather than that, Kelpie, I want to go somewhere further."

Lydia had to stay within the area where the sea cape was visible. The suitable magic treatment was concentrated on that cape and she had been warned that the further she distanced herself from there, the more the wound would hurt.

However, was that really the case?

Of course, it was needless to say about Patrick, but even in Fergus' case, she didn't know whether or not he could be trusted.

"It could be done but the magic flow ahead is different."

"I'm only going for a little while."

Kelpie slowly walked forward along the seashore. However, with just a few yards away from where they started, the wound on Lydia's back started to hurt.

Her hand that was grabbing on to Kelpie's mane couldn't help but tense up.

Kelpie seemed to have noticed it, and so he stopped.

"Hey, are you alright?"

"Yeah..... sure enough, it's impossible."

Just as Kelpie was turning around to head towards the other direction, a man riding a horse stood ahead of them.

"It's Kelpie, he was also hanging around Miss Lydia when he was in London....."

It was Patrick, and he was holding an exorcism dagger. Kelpie retreated

slightly because the dagger was exuding unpleasant magic.

Patrick dismounted from the horse and put up a defensive posture as he approached.

"I heard that Miss Lydia came out for a walk alone and I felt that it was very unusual." Unexpectedly, an Unseelie Court has invaded this place."

"Mr. Patrick, please stop....."

But Patrick was threatening Kelpie with the dagger.

"Put her down and leave this place."

Kelpie was slowly retreating.

"This Kelpie is a friend of mine."

Lydia called out and Patrick looked at her with cold eyes.

"Even though you are a fairy doctor, aren't you putting too much confidence in your abilities? He isn't a fairy that you can trust."

"This has nothing to do with my ability, I know him well!"

Patrick exposed a puzzled look for a moment, but put his attention back to Kelpie, who was intending to make a move.

Kelpie kicked the ground and headed towards Patrick.

"Move, Lydia!"

The moment Kelpie said these words, Lydia fell from his back. No, it should be

said that she was gently put down and sat on the sand. But when she hurriedly looked up, Kelpie was already charging towards Patrick.

However, something invisible repelled Kelpie away.

“Damn it, he actually used several kinds of exorcism tools.....”

Kelpie fell to the ground and seemed to be unable to move.

Patrick intended to get closer.

“Disappear, Unseelie Court.”

He wielded the dagger. Lydia ran forward.

“Lydia, don’t come here!”

She ignored Kelpie’s instruction and intended to rush forward to protect him.

The dagger came towards Lydia and she instinctively closed her eyes, but in the next moment, she heard the sound of clashing metal and opened her eyes in surprise.

The dagger flew in a curve and pierced the waterside.

Unable to move, Patrick dumbfoundedly withdrew his right hand as a young man with brown skin held a knife to his neck.

“Raven.....?”

“Would you like me to kill him?”

He asked with an expressionless face.

“S---stop it, don’t kill him.”

Lydia told Kelpie in a whisper to take the opportunity to escape immediately.

After Kelpie disappeared, Raven removed the knife from Patrick and stood by Lydia's side, as if to protect her.

"Are you hurt, Miss Lydia?"

"I'm not, we just had a little misunderstanding, Mr. Patrick isn't an enemy....."

"I understand, but he could have hurt you earlier."

"What is Earl Ashenbert's valet doing here?"

Patrick wiped off his cold sweat and looked at Raven to make sure.

"I brought him here."

He turned his head upon hearing that voice, and saw Lota casually pulling up the skirt of her dress as she skipped over the rocky area.

"Lota!"

"Lydia, I came to find you because I was so worried!"

Lota ran over and happily embraced Lydia.

"I'm sorry..... I couldn't contact you. Ah that's right, I was supposed to have returned to London earlier."

"It's alright, it's so nice to see that you're well. I was shocked to hear that you received a near-fatal wound."

"I was able to live a normal life while I was here, but....."

Since she came to such a distant place with Kelpie, Lydia's wound had started to hurt.

Lydia's mood relaxed upon seeing Lota, but the pain had caught up to her consciousness once more and she couldn't help but show a painful expression.

"It's best to return to the mansion soon or else Miss Lydia's condition will be affected."

Holding Lydia, Lota nodded in response to Patrick's words.

Not long after Edgar and Paul disappeared together with the ghost ship, Raven decided to visit the McKeel clan's land once more.

To Raven, the idea of being separated from Edgar was absolutely unacceptable.

However, questions such as, how could he catch up to the ghost spirits, and where Edgar currently was, he did not know the answers at all.

In the end, he thought he could only discuss it with Nico.

Not only was Nico a fairy, but he had lived on this archipelago for a long time. He should know about the Blue Men as well as the 'Master of the Islands.'"

He had previously suggested to Edgar to look for Nico. Although Edgar did not come to any conclusion at the time, nor did he give any instructions to Raven, it

seemed that there was no other way.

As for Lota, she observed the sea along the straits for a while, but the weather was recovering and she judged that Edgar and Paul wouldn't be returning, so she steered the ship towards the island where the McKeel clan's land was.

Her original intention of coming here was to see Lydia, so it was understandable that she would do that.

Kelly was informed of Lydia's whereabouts through the Connaught clan head, and Raven had long known about that, so there was no issue.

It was said that it was located at a cape along the coastline, so they were able to determine the location of a lone mansion with a telescope from the ship.

And so, Raven rode on a small boat with Lota to come ashore.

Although he encountered the scene where Kelpie and Patrick were confronting each other, being able to protect Lydia made Raven feel very satisfied.

Being able to see Lydia also seemed to make Lota feel at ease. She was now accompanying Lydia, who was resting.

On the other hand, Raven sat on a bench at the back of the house, thinking how he could see Nico.

"Hey, what are you doing here?"

The one who said that and stood in front of Raven was Fergus.

"I am not obligated to answer."

"Hmph, in that case the Earl must be scheming something. But even if he wanted to find the medicine to withstand the Aurora fairies' blade, it's futile."

"Lord Edgar will be the one to judge if it is futile or not."

"All in all, if Lydia doesn't stay here, her wound won't heal. You know that too, right? Quickly return and inform the Earl."

Raven stood up.

"No matter how many years have passed, I do not think that Miss Lydia will fall in love with you."

Fergus frowned.

"How would you know about that?"

"Lord Edgar has been putting forth his best effort for a whole year. Before then, I have not come across any woman whom Lord Edgar could not pursue within an hour."

After Raven said that with a serious expression, Fergus said with a surprised look:

"What? How could there be such a guy?!"

"At any rate, there is nothing you can do."

".....Lydia is already willing to open up her heart to me. Besides, speaking of one year, I have even more time for that."

Fergus probably noticed the murderous intent in Raven's gaze and retreated back after saying that.

Raven exhaled deeply.

"It's unfortunate. If Lord Edgar was here, I could beat you up until you're half dead."

He turned around and left the area.

As he walked, he tried to reorganize his thoughts right before Fergus interrupted him.

In the dream, Nico could be seen standing on the mountain. In short, he had to go there.

Although he had thought to discuss this with Lydia, but making her overly worried probably isn't Edgar's intention.

Moreover, he couldn't let her good physical condition deteriorate, so he really could only rely on Nico.

Raven looked around the surrounding landscape. The terrain in this area was undulating and there were no mountains to be seen.

"Mr. Nico, where are you.....?"

"I'm right here."

Raven stopped in surprise.

When he turned around to look all over the place, a gray cat that was laying on the grass sat up.

Hey, Nico held up one paw.

"Did you come with Lota? A huge ship stopped at the sea, so I thought something was up and went to take a look."

Nico had a leisurely face and looked just like his usual self.

"Were you by Miss Lydia's side.....? You said previously that you could not bear to watch, so I thought that perhaps you were not here."

"Yes, that's what I was planning at first, but I still couldn't let go of Lydia."

He stood up, placed his paws behind his back and nodded.

"She wants me to stay by her side. It was inevitable that she felt lonely because I was gone. Well, we're just like family after all."

At the corner of his eyes, Nico looked down, as if he was not as annoyed as he would have Raven to believe.

"Mr. Nico, do you not feel lonely all by yourself?"

"Huh? Ah, why would I feel lonely? I am an extraordinary gentleman."

Nico's whiskers kept twitching, but Raven did not notice it.

"You are right, I cannot imagine the scene of Mr. Nico holding Miss Lydia and crying."

Nico narrowed his eyes and stood stiff in place, but Raven did not notice it.

“.....Speaking of which, what are you doing here, Raven?”

Raven remembered his main purpose and looked tensely at Nico.

“Mr. Nico, do you hate me?”

“What do you mean?”

“I was hoping to borrow your wisdom, but it is something related to the Unseelie. Lord Edgar would use any means to get back Miss Lydia. In order to obtain the medicine to eliminate the Aurora fairy toxins, I was wondering if I could discuss it with you, and so I came here.”

So that's how it is. Nico looked down.

“Are you doing this according to the Earl's command? Then I will only hate the Earl alone.”

“This is not a command.”

Raven said firmly.

“Lord Edgar did not give me any commands and boarded the ghost ship. I wanted to go after them.”

“Ghost ship?”

“Yes, that ship belongs to what is known as the existence of the Blue Men. I heard that if it is that ship, then it can get close to the ‘Master of the Islands.’”

“.....As for this, I think that there's nothing you could do even if you were by his side. Whether the Earl is the Blue Knight or Prince, I don't think he has the

power to awaken the Master. If you do not succeed in achieving your goal, you will be trapped in the Master's dreamland and turn into Blue Men like them. These are the only two possible outcomes."

"But, I have to go."

Nico lifted his head and looked up at Raven in wonder.

"This is your own opinion, why did you decide it to be so? Is it because without Edgar, the sprite within you would go on a rampage?"

Raven had never revealed his thoughts to this day, but now he clearly understood that he came to Nico's side due to his own volition. He thought hard about Nico's question and finally answered:

"Indeed, it is difficult to suppress the sprite with my own will..... but no matter what, I want to stay by Lord Edgar's side."

At this moment, Lota rushed out of the mansion. After she saw Raven, she ran hurriedly towards him.

"Hey! Raven, it's bad!"

"What is the matter?"

"Lydia's... condition...."

Chapter 5: The Island where the jewels lie

Why did Raven and Lota come?

Lydia thought about this while in bed, on the verge of falling asleep.

Having returned to the mansion on the cape, in addition to her backache starting up again, she had developed a small fever and was made by Kelly to drink some medicine. This was what invited Lydia to sleep.

Lota is by my side.

Since they had finally met after a long time, she wanted to speak to her about various things and yet...

Since Raven is together with her, I wonder if that means Lota met Edgar.

Edgar.....I wonder what he's up to right now.

I wonder if he's already had a change of heart since a while back.

Both Raven and Lota might have come to inform her that her engagement was officially nullified. When she thought of this, Lydia felt pain in her chest.

Something ridiculous like the nullification of their engagement. Even though breaking up is something that should be conveyed by the person themselves, those words that popped into her head were painful.

What life would be like if they were married was something that Lydia could not simply stop thinking about. With him by her side in the mornings and the evenings, they would become a family and the years would pass; such

happiness that would be.

When she imagined them, even those things she anxiously looked forward to became sad memories.

(.....Lord Edgar is.....on the ghost ship.....)

A faint voice reached her ears. Beyond the veil of her hazy dream, in the realm of consciousness, Raven and Nico were talking.

What do they mean? A ghost ship?

Blue Men, Master of the islands -- hearing such disconnected words made Lydia suddenly anxious. Perhaps Raven hadn't come to bid farewell to Lydia.

"Lydia, at this rate he'll end up as the Prince of Calamity."

Surprised by the voice, Lydia looked around the vicinity. As if in between dreams and reality, a young man she had seen once before, was standing.

"You....who are you?"

The other time, he had guided Lydia to where Edgar was.

"Me? I'm a dream. Just one part of the dream seen by the 'Master of the Islands.'"

The Master's dream.....?

"You know that he has a connection with the Prince of Calamity?"

"The Master knows. He knows everything that occurs on the islands."

"Why are you trying to make me go to him?"

"It's because you're probably the only one who can stop him."

What do you mean?

"Accompanied by Blue Men, he is getting closer to the Master. If the Master were to wake up, the magical power trapped in the dream will gush forth to the surface. The magical power is neither good nor evil, but if the Prince of Calamity gathers the Unseelie Court, then they can do as they please with the islands. The people will lose hope, which will only allow the Unseelie Court to get stronger."

"That can't be.....does this mean he still hasn't given up on the medicine?"

Lydia was astonished, and approached the young man.

He slowly nodded his head.

Was it because of this that Lota and Raven appeared here? Because Edgar had gone off to where the Blue Men were?

While wondering what to do, Lydia felt herself tremble and hugged herself.

Edgar hadn't accepted Lydia's words of farewell.

".....It's impossible. I can't stop him."

Whether he was apart from her, or by her side, he would continue to change.

"Another possibility is that before awakening the Master, he may lose his life."

The young man said that in order to threaten Lydia.

"If that's the case, then you won't have anything to worry about."

Lydia said that while hiding the fact that her heart was anything but calm. She was overwhelmed by the feeling of needing to go to where Edgar was immediately. However, she didn't know how to stop him and so she still hesitated.

"The problem is that he's the Blue Knight Earl. He's the Prince of Calamity and the Blue Knight Earl..... Even Master doesn't know which one he really is."

While heaving a sigh, the young man narrowed his eyes as if looking off into the distance.

"There's no choice but to wait until the Prophet makes sure of it."

The Prophet will? If he determines Edgar to be an enemy, then Edgar will most likely be killed. Or else, maybe it was okay to still believe in the possibility that Edgar will deal with the matter without becoming Prince.

"For the time being, there's no choice but to leave this matter to you."

The young man faintly smiled.

"I'm not someone who's on the side of the Prophet or the McKeel Clan. I'm his.....fiancée."

"Of course, I know this."

"Does the Prophet really exist?"

"Lots of unforeseen events have happened. However, you've reached the conclusion that he doesn't exist only because he hasn't appeared yet, right?"

After saying this, the young man disappeared.

".....I have to go," Lydia whispered.

She didn't know if she could stop Edgar on her own.

Whether Lydia was there or not, Edgar had no choice but to go on carrying Prince's memories.

Even though he made the choice of receiving his longtime enemy's memories for Lydia's sake, perhaps he was disappointed in her after she said they should separate. If that was the case then it was unthinkable that he would listen to anything she had to say.

Although what she thought of doing for Edgar's sake had backfired, she wondered if there wasn't anything else she could do.

Even so, I have to go.

"I have to stop Edgar."

"You don't know the way by yourself, do you? Furthermore, if you become lost, you won't be able to return."

When she realized it, Kelpie was right there.

"The one who talked to you, what being was that? I felt like I shouldn't come closer, so I only heard your conversation."

"It was a dream, apparently."

"Hmm, well, whatever. In any case, get on."

"Kelpie, you know where the Blue Men are?"

"No idea, but if it's you, you should have an idea of the Earl's whereabouts."

I wonder if I know.

In the middle of the dream, while riding on Kelpie's back, Lydia closed her eyes in an attempt to sense Edgar.

"Hmm, well it seems that just her soul entered a dream again."

Nico stared at Lydia who was lying in bed, then turned to look at the worried Lota.

"Entered a dream?"

Lydia appeared completely motionless. Not only did it look like she wasn't breathing, but there was no reaction to calling out to her or shaking her.

Because of this, Lota ran outside in a panic.

However, judging by Nico's attitude, Lydia's condition didn't seem like something that could be immediately restored.

"Ahh, that's it. Lydia can't leave this place, right? That's why she slipped into a dream, in order to meet the Earl it seems."

"About the Earl, the Miss, to such an extent....."

Kelly was moved to tears. The girl was from a clan that Edgar was familiar with, and stayed by Lydia's side as her maid. For someone like Edgar, Lota thought that he made a decent choice with Kelly. She never seemed to act on

her own wishes or have evil ideas. It seemed quite natural for her to be by Lydia's side.

That Kelly, not realizing that it was Nico who spoke, looked up at Raven, who was beside the cat, with wet eyes.

Raven, with the same lack of expression that didn't give away any bewilderment, simply averted his gaze.

"Then, the situation is that Lydia came to know about Edgar's present condition and went to go save him?"

"I think that's probably the case."

"Then, we have no choice but to follow then. Nico, which way should we go? Where is Edgar?"

Nico heaved a sigh and started to think.

"If I remember correctly.....I've heard that the undersea rocky area where the Blue Men have their nest is connected to some small island somewhere."

"I wonder which small island."

"Hey Lota, where did you encounter the Blue Men? I believe the probability that they live somewhere around there is high."

"Alright, I'll look into it."

"Um, is there anything I can help with?"

Kelly seemed as if she wanted to be useful with all her might.

"That's right," Lota murmured.

"It seems like Fergus and Patrick may pose a problem. With us away and with Lydia in this condition, they might get wind of something."

"As far as today goes, Mr. Patrick returned to the clan head's estate, so I don't think he will come until tomorrow. Furthermore, that person won't make it a point to come to the bedroom to visit the Miss. As long as we are careful to not allow Mr. Fergus into the bedroom, then we can deceive them about Miss Lydia's condition."

"Alright, then we'll leave it to you, Kelly."

As Lota clapped her on the shoulder, Kelly vigorously nodded.

Raven looked towards the doorway as if he felt something. However, when he checked, there was already no one there.

After the door was closed, the mantle of the red kilt that had been holding its breath while under cover, softly fluttered.

*

* * *

The ghost ship was already sailing in the ocean waters unnoticed.

Standing on the deck littered with holes, leaning on the railing that seemed like it could break at any moment, he gazed out at the ocean while a school of fish swam by before his eyes. Paul looked toward Edgar anxiously. Paul's hair, with its kinks and curls, swayed like aquatic plants.

Edgar's golden hair also swayed in the same way.

Rather than saying that it was alright, Edgar gave Paul a smile.

This area was probably the fairy realm. It seemed as such because one wouldn't drown in the waters here, and even though there wasn't any light, one could dimly make out the immediate surroundings.

The ship, as if it were drifting aimlessly, slowly moved forward.

"Paul, for the time being, once we reach their dwelling place, I'll have you escorted back to the human world so please bear with it a little longer, okay?"

Being told this, Paul made a complicated face and cast his head downwards.

"Earl, I....."

"Since you're a kind person, you might be thinking that you shouldn't leave me alone. However, there's no need to be concerned. After all, I hid the fact that I inherited Prince's memories from you and from the other members of Scarlet Moon."

"That, since when...."

"Since the time we buried that 'Prince'. So that a new successor wouldn't be born, I made this choice. I want to think that nothing will change, but I have been changing little by little. One day I might become like that man. Paul, the organization that killed your father is trying to get me to lead them."

Edgar recalled that Nico left due to this. He felt he had done something terrible to Raven.

In addition, though she verbally said that she had accepted this, Lydia was still unable to be together with him due to this.

As this rate, maybe she really does intend to break up with me.

"That's why, Paul, it's okay to think of me as your enemy."

"And what about Miss Lydia?"

With hesitation, Paul asked again.

Certainly, Fergus is much more of an ideal man for Lydia than I am. There's no helping it if she becomes attracted to him.

While thinking like this, Edgar was unable to come to terms with it.

"I know. However, Lydia is the only thing I won't let go of. Even if she can't accept the me right now with her heart, because I want her by my side, I need the medicine at all costs."

Paul looked at Edgar with a stiff expression. It even seemed as if he was angry.
That's not impossible, thought Edgar as he heaved a sigh.

"Do you not care whether or not I'm here?"

It was clearly an irritated tone of voice.

Unaware of why he was angry, Edgar tilted his head in confusion.

"Whether I think of you as an enemy or as a friend, doing as you please is.....Ahh!"

At that moment, the ship violently lurched.

Paul lost his balance and fell, tumbling about on top of the deck.

"Paul!"

Edgar, who had grabbed ahold of the mast, stretched out a hand towards Paul and somehow managed to grab him.

"E-Earl....., are you alright?!"

While saying this, he clung to Edgar.

"Don't fall overboard, because in a place like the sea of the fairies, I definitely won't be able to save you."

Nodding furiously, Paul desperately stretched his hand out towards the mast.

The waves surged terribly. Even though everything was quiet until just a while ago, it was enough to make anyone wonder what had happened.

"Captain! What's going on?"

Edgar questioned the Blue Men whose form could not be seen.

(It's prey, Sir.)

There was a reply immediately.

(There's a fool who brought his ship out in bad weather. We're going to take a small detour.)

It seemed that the blue ghosts were approaching a ship in the rough seas of the human world.

(We'll capture them and make them our slaves.)

Just as they revealed their figures, they nimbly disappeared from the ship

while creating whirlpools in the current. The waves continued to swell and the ship continued to sway while making a creaking noise.

"It doesn't seem like something humans would ride," Edgar muttered.

A short time later, the swaying completely stopped and Paul lay down on the deck, completely exhausted.

Edgar stood up to check the state of their surroundings.

The ghosts, who seemed to have returned in no time at all, were gathered at the stern of the ship and seemed to be making a fuss about something.

In the middle of that circle was a human collapsed on the ground, tied up with rope. That's right, he was most likely a human. Different from the ghosts, he was properly wearing a kilt.

A red-headed young man.....

It was Fergus.

Noticing this, Edgar stopped in his tracks.

His eyes were closed, and he seemed to have lost consciousness since he wasn't moving at all, but there was no mistake, it was that man.

By saying that she was concerned about this guy, Lydia had ended her farewell to Edgar.

If only this guy wasn't around.

While thinking this, Edgar felt that if Fergus became a slave of the Blue Men and was made to work for eternity, then it served him right. He wanted to laugh

and let this happen.

However, if he were to disappear, then would Lydia feel sad?

On the matter of whether she was being serious or not, Edgar was in doubt. But still, he thought that to Lydia, who was in an unfamiliar land, Fergus probably felt like a familiar person.

He didn't want to hand Lydia over to the likes of another man. But on the other hand, Edgar felt hesitation at robbing Lydia of what she needed. He didn't know if he could stay by her side and hold onto her hereafter and forever.

If something were to happen to him, then to Fergus....such things were completely out of the question because he won't hand her over. Even so, he was frightened of letting someone who might be able to save her get snatched away.

"Won't you hand him over to me?"

As Edgar interrupted them, the Blue Men simultaneously turned to look at him.

"I also want a slave."

(Well of course, we don't mind, Sir.)

(Hey, Captain, this is our slave.)

(Well, isn't it fine? This Sir will free us from Master.)

(Does he really have that kind of power?)

(You saw his sword, right?)

(But still, we don't know whether that will be effective against the Master.)

(If it turns out to be impossible, we'll just make him a slave at once.)

(I see, as expected of our Captain.)

Though they intended to converse sneakily amongst themselves, Edgar could hear everything. Still, he quietly waited until they were finished.

Seeming to have reached a conclusion immediately, one of them handed over the end of the rope currently binding Fergus to Edgar.

(Don't let this one get away. If you let him go, you lose ownership. Then if we catch him again, he becomes our possession, alright?)

Having said this, the Blue Men quickly disappeared.

The ship began to slowly move forward again.

"Earl....., what do you plan to do with that person?"

Even though Paul was completely exhausted, he was surprised at hearing that Edgar wanted one of the Blue Mens' slaves and tried to get closer while crawling.

Edgar tried to nudge Fergus with the tips of his toes. As he did so, Fergus' eyes slowly opened.

He saw Edgar, and knit his brows together as if displeased.

"That's right, should I make you work for me until you become skin and

bones?" Edgar muttered, narrowing his ash mauve eyes. Although it was intended to be a joke, there might have been some seriousness behind his tone of voice.

Fergus suddenly opened his eyes wide and shouted, "Uwaaah!" as he jumped to his feet.

"W-Why are you...., no, where am I?"

"This is the Blue Men of the Minchs' ghost ship. You were captured by them."

"Earl, is he an acquaintance of yours?" Paul asked.

"Well, kind of."

".....Then, were you guys captured as well?"

Fergus looked around restlessly before returning his gaze to Edgar again.

"No, we're guests of this ship. You, on the other hand, have become my slave."

In a flash, his eyebrows furrowed into deep wrinkles.

"Slave, you say? I'm the son of the head of the McKeel clan! I won't do as I'm told...."

Fergus, who tried to stand up, suddenly fell forward onto the floor. It was because Edgar had pulled tightly on the rope tied around his waist.

"Wha- what are you doing?!"

While having his forehead pressed down, Fergus tried to raise his head, but Edgar kept it pinned down.

"As long as I don't give you permission, you aren't even able to lift your head."

Seemingly unable to find any strength, Fergus grimaced in humiliation.

Edgar crouched down next to him and pointed at the holes in the tattered floorboards.

"I wonder if you can see them. The slaves who keep this ship moving. You don't want to become like them, right?"

Trapped in the ship's bottom, they would continue rowing for eternity. Upon seeing the skeletons of former humans, Fergus turned pale.

Seemingly having lost all intent to resist, Fergus became unsteady on his feet and leaned against the side of the ship.

"Well then, shall I have you answer my questions? Fergus, why did you come as far as this rough strait? Did you know that I was still in the Hebrides and come to capture me?"

Nevertheless, Fergus had continued to try and untie the rope around his waist, but soon gave up and lifted his face.

".....Lota and your attendant came to where Lydia is. You and Paul..... is that him? They were talking about you both disappearing with the ghost ship. Since

they said they were going to go with Nico to where the blue ghosts are, I came ahead of them."

"What? Lota and Raven are....? But Earl, since we've parted with them, it's only been about two or three hours, right?"

Paul tilted his head to the side in confusion.

"The passing of time in the fairy realm is different. To Raven and the others, it probably seems that a lot more time has passed."

Because he had gotten separated from Edgar, did Raven go to Nico seeking assistance?

"So then, Fergus, just why did you purposely came all the way into the rough seas, trying to chase after me?"

"That's because....Lydia."

"Lydia? Did something happen?"

Fergus hesitated to say. He pondered for a short while in silence, then lifted his head and glowered at Edgar.

"No, I came for Lydia's sake. She said that she didn't want you to do anything unnecessary."

"Anything unnecessary, you say?"

Edgar suddenly lost his cool and grabbed Fergus by the collar.

"Ahh, that's right. Even without the medicine, given enough time, the wound will heal. Even so, you accompany the Unseelie Court, trying to steal the

medicine, even though you might awaken the 'Master of the Islands.'"

"Don't tell lies. There's no way Lydia would call something like this unnecessary."

"In any case, give it up! If it's for Lydia's sake then even more so, give up. You should understand that she doesn't wish for something like this, right?"

Without realizing it, he had clenched his fist tightly. However, at the same time he felt a deep exhaustion towards this guy who didn't understand anything.

"Earl, please calm down....."

It wasn't necessary for Paul to mediate, for Edgar took his hands off Fergus.

Taking deep breaths to calm himself, he sat down in a slump. As if at his wit's end, he buried his fingers into his golden hair.

There was no mistake in what Fergus had said. Lydia definitely didn't wish for Edgar to approach the Unseelie Court and use the power that came with Prince's memories.

However Fergus, understandably, didn't know even a bit about the earnest feelings between them.

"Lydia said she won't accept any treatment. She insisted on returning to London with me, even going as far as to say that she would wait for death alone if I left her behind..... That was the first time she's ever said anything as selfishly as a lover would, to me. She, who always thinks of others and never makes

anything but the most humble requests, lay her feelings bare, went as far as to say that she didn't care what happened, and asked for me. Those were her true feelings. That's why, if there's a way, I will sell my soul to the devil in order to try and grant her desire....."

Even supposing that Lydia had now lost those feelings, Edgar wanted the medicine for the sake of the Lydia at that time.

To him, Lydia wasn't the girl who appeared in his dreams to bid him farewell, but the girl he deceived in order to leave behind, unable to utilize her selfishness, his fiancée.

Both were unmistakably Lydia. However, at any rate, the true feelings she was forced to display while at the village of the Connaught Clan couldn't be thought of as anything else but signs of a farewell.

".....If you do something like sell your soul to the devil, it will only cause Lydia to become disillusioned with you." Fergus, his spirit somewhat weakened, muttered these few words.

"In that case, Fergus, that will just mean that she will also become disillusioned with you who was unable to stop me."

After that, everyone stayed silent for a long time.

Both Edgar and Fergus were sitting down without moving at all.

In the midst of those two, Paul opened his mouth to speak.

"Earl, I won't return by myself."

At those sudden words, Edgar lifted his head while trying to remember what Paul was talking about.

"I won't do a thing like leave you behind and return to the human world. I'll follow you to the place where the medicine is supposed to be."

It seemed like the continuation of their conversation from earlier, before Fergus had appeared.

"Paul, what are you saying? Besides not knowing what lies ahead, it's wrong of you to be put in harm's way for my sake."

"It's not wrong! Earl, isn't it clear that you haven't become what Prince wanted? Even now, in this manner, you're trying to protect not just Miss Lydia obviously, but even the likes of me. You are someone who doesn't hesitate to get his hands dirty, yet you are unable to allow anyone else do the same for your sake. There's no way that you will be controlled by Prince."

Paul had become unusually passionate.

"You've gotten your revenge against that Prince. I, along with everyone else in Scarlet Moon, were liberated thanks to you. Not only is there no longer any reason to fight, but we are also no longer frightened of Prince's evil hand."

"Revenge?"

Fergus interjected in a puzzled tone, but this didn't seem to reach Paul's ears, who continued speaking passionately.

"Earl, you aren't Prince. You just became a sacrifice for everyone else's sake and took responsibility for something abominable. That's why, I'll do anything in order to protect you!"

This was completely unexpected. He thought he had no choice but to fight what was inside of him on his own from now on, but perhaps this didn't have to be the case.

"Paul.....thank you."

Starting to smile, it seemed that Paul had finally found relief. It was the usual, slightly embarrassed smile that surfaced; this smile gave Edgar the confidence that the strength of Paul's friendship hadn't changed.

(Sir, we're about to enter the rock face.)

The voice of a Blue Men came out of nowhere. Edgar looked around, and saw a towering rocky mountain up ahead.

Its peak was probably what was sticking up above the surface of the sea. The place where they lived seemed pretty deep and you couldn't see above very well, thought Edgar as he looked around.

"Earl, we- we're about to get sucked into the crack!"

As Paul shouted, the crack in the rock approached closer. The ship headed towards it just like that, and gained speed as it rode eddies of the current.

The ship began to sway greatly once more.

Edgar and the others needed to grab onto something in their surroundings in order not to get thrown off, but foaming water suddenly began to close in on

them, so while unable to see anything, they clung to the hand railing for dear life.

However, the water wasn't painful, and felt like wind to Edgar.

Once everything calmed down and Edgar opened his eyes, it seemed as if the ship was in the middle of some cavern and had been run aground.

This place was already not within the sea. The ground was just barely damp from seawater.

It seemed to be a beach that the tide had pulled away from, with tangles of seaweed and tide pools here and there.

The Blue Men got off the ship one by one.

Edgar and the others were also made to do so, using a rope ladder to descend onto the rocky area. Once they had done so, the ship's captain came near and pointed out a narrow tunnel that could be seen towards the interior.

(From here we are already close to the Master's dream. Up ahead is the entrance where you can go farther into the dream.)

(Unless you go through there, you cannot reach the source of the Master's dream.....However, as soon as you touch the entrance you need to cast away all wicked desires. If you don't, you'll feel the Master's wrath.)

"Does that mean we'll become just like you?"

(That's right. You'll become a ghost bound to this gloomy rock face. Night after night you'll just go out onto the rough seas.)

"Hmmm, you pirates. It was probably because you tried to steal the master's treasure."

Though Fergus muttered this, the former pirates smiled with nostalgia, as if even their humiliating pasts were long ago.

(Good grief. Even though long ago we had control over a great number of things in the ocean, to think that we would end up this far north, trapped in this narrow strait.)

(Sir, please destroy the Master's dream and share the spring of magical power with us. If you do that then we will become free. We'll be able to rampage out on the ocean as much as we please.)

"Don't say such ridiculous things! If Unseelie Court fairies became free, then you'll surely cause trouble for the islands' clans!"

The ghosts laughed at Fergus' outburst as if they were making fun of him.

(Either way, a calamity will soon befall the human world. The tear in the Master's dream that exists here keeps growing, and I hear that even the Sluagh have been freely rioting in the world of humans.)

"That's the doing of the Prince of Calamity."

(When the Prince of Calamity was born, it allowed the Unseelie Court to gain strength. Although that's true, since long before that, in these islands, a seam opened in the Master's dream, a tear large enough to produce the Prince of Calamity.)

"Why did the Master's power weaken?" asked Edgar.

(Wasn't that because, before the dream was completed, the humans weren't careful when sealing the ripped seam?)

(The humans of that time had started to forget about the Master.)

(Master didn't do anything. He didn't even show himself. It was because he just kept dreaming. For humans, he's likely a being that's even harder to believe in than fairies.)

Whether or not it was because he couldn't object, Fergus stayed silent.

"Let's go."

Edgar started walking, heading towards the entrance of the Master's dream.

Giving a firm nod of his head, Paul followed after him. Even Fergus who was still bound by the rope, rather than saying he had no choice, started walking by his own free will.

* * *

The party of Lota and the others landed on the island they had marked.

The place was not too far from the island where Lota had reunited with Edgar

and Raven, and since the weather was good today, its silhouette could faintly be seen.

After alighting on the very small uninhabited island, the first person to speak was Raven.

"I wonder if this place is one of the islands belonging to the 'Master of the Islands.'"

"By Master do you mean the guy Edgar mentioned, the one who has the medicine? If that's the case, then I wonder if the medicine is also here."

The boat had finally been able to approach the cove where rocks were scattered about everywhere. One way or another, they climbed up a hill on which some grass had sprung up. Lota looked around and took stock of their surroundings.

"The medicine is within the dream right? Even if this is the Master's island, unless we can enter the dream we won't be able to find it."

Nico also stepped firmly on the ground with his two hind legs.

If one were to stand there, they could see the sea on the other side. What a truly small island this was.

Where was Lydia? The presence of the girl who had slipped into the dream couldn't be felt here.

However, this was about Lydia. Before very long, she would surely need help and call for Nico. If she was close by, then her voice would reach him. He'll be able to find Lydia. Thinking this, Nico came with Lota.

Since he didn't see any sign of Kelpie, it was possible that he was with Lydia. However, even though he was a fairy with a huge build and powerful magic, the only one who could become Lydia's emotional support was himself, thought Nico.

He knew Lydia way better than someone like Kelpie.

He had watched over her since she was a child.

Lydia was stubborn and pretended to be strong. Ever since her mother passed away, she would act cheerfully in front of her father and grandmother. Even when she was treated unkindly for being able to see fairies, she didn't cry in front of people. Only Nico had wiped away her tears.

Although he understood Lydia better than anyone, why did he become separated from her? While pondering this, he was feeling regret.

Was it because his duty, given to him by Aurora, to oversee Lydia's growth into adulthood, had finished?

That wasn't it. Nico probably decided to leave her because he realized that once Lydia got married, she truly wouldn't need him anymore, and he hated that.

That's why, when she appeared looking for Nico, he felt happy.

"Hey Nico, do you think this place is connected to the Blue Mens' nest?"

After Lota asked him this, Nico meaningfully combed his fur which had become blown about by the wind. Although he had been making a face like he was about to cry, Lota probably hadn't noticed this.

"We'll need to find a path that leads underground."

"Underground huh. Does that mean there are stairs somewhere? Raven, this has been an uninhabited island since long ago, right?"

"That's what I had heard. In the past, this place was used to give offerings to the Master and the like. However, it seems that Englishmen had been targeting it and tried to gain occupation of it illegally."

"The Englishmen wanted an island like this? There's so little grass you could barely raise sheep in a place like this."

"I heard there was something like jewels here, though."

"Jewels? It's probably because it's been said that the heart of the Master's dream is made with a jewel." Nico muttered.

"Is that so?"

"Ahh, there's a legend that back when the Blue Men were pirates, they were targeting it. In any case, if the story about the jewels is true, then the possibility of there being an entrance on this island grows higher."

Nico, who had been walking around on top of the hill, suddenly noticed something and stopped.

"There's a cavity here."

"What, where?"

Lota rushed over and looked around hurriedly, but couldn't see anything.

"From this point is the fairy world. However, unless you enter by yourself, I won't be able to bring you along."

"If we can see it, can we enter?"

Raven, who had come to Nico's side, peered in.

"Raven, you can see it?"

"Yes. There's a hole here."

While thinking that this was unexpected, Nico inclined his head in puzzlement, but in any case, if Raven could see it then Nico could only take him.

Lota surprisingly accepted this readily.

"Then I'll wait here. Raven, please take care not to abandon Paul."

Raven looked back as if surprised.

"Is Mr. Ferman with Lord Edgar?"

"Hah? You saw it too! Paul fell into the ocean with Edgar!"

As Lota pressed him, Raven blinked.

".....I remember now."

"Sheesh, did you forget about Paul completely?! Ahh jeez, I'm worried. You'll definitely protect Edgar and Lydia, but you won't pay attention to Paul at all huh?"

"For the time being, I will remember him."

That's mere consolation, murmured Nico, as he jumped into the gaping hole in the ground that led to the fairy world.

Raven followed after him. The hole didn't seem that deep, but when he looked up, he could no longer see Lota's figure.

From there, a gently-sloping grotto that continued downward was connected.

"Let's go, Raven."

"Yes."

After walking a bit, the path split into two. Having come to a standstill, Nico felt troubled and folded his arms.

"I wonder which way we should go."

"That's right, it must be this way."

Nico took a wild guess and said this.

"As expected of Mr. Nico. You are very knowledgeable about the paths to the fairy world."

Nico was one who would get carried away when praised. He pressed forward with confidence and his chest puffed out with pride. But, the path forked again.

Without letting on that he was lost, he quickly picked the right fork.

However, as the number of forked paths kept increasing, Nico began to feel panicked.

"Mr. Nico, isn't this the three-forked junction we were just at?"

"Ah, ahh....., well, I made a small mistake. We actually have to go this way."

"We went that way before, too."

"Th-that's right. This way."

"We just came from that way though."

"Ummm...."

Nico didn't know what was what anymore.

He didn't even know which way to return. Nico took his head in his hands and sat down.

"I'm sorry, we've become lost!"

"I see."

Raven said this without any emotion, but since it wasn't different from his usual tone, Nico couldn't tell whether or not Raven was disillusioned with him.

He sat down next to the disheartened Nico. Perhaps because he was also at a loss, he sank into silence.

".....I'm really such a useless fairy. Of course, I know more about the fairy world than Lydia, but I'm just an ordinary fairy. Unless one has a great number of special skills, they only have a bit of magical power."

"I know."

To this blunt statement that held no malice, Nico didn't even have a reply. He became increasingly depressed and hung his head.

"But when I'm with Mr. Nico, I get the feeling that one way or another everything will work out. As if the situation will never become grave."

It seemed like Raven was trying to cheer Nico up.

"Surely, Mr. Nico is lucky."

It was hard to tell whether he was praising him or not. Nevertheless, Nico raised his head.

It looked like Raven was smiling just a tiny bit.

Perhaps he really thought so and had become optimistic.

However Nico was still pessimistic. If this path to the fairy world had been made naturally, there's no way he would have gotten lost.

It seems like there was some special power at work here. It wasn't like the magic of the Blue Men, so it was probably the dream of the "Master of the Islands" that was influencing this grotto.

Even Nico didn't quite know anything about the Master. They had gotten lost in an unthinkable place.

"Um."

Raven started to speak again, as if he had thought of something.

"I thought that I should return this."

He took something out of his pocket and placed it onto Nico's small palm. It was a polished round bloodstone.

"I thought this was something Mr. Nico lost, so I have been keeping it for you."

It was the stone he kept as a memento of Aurora, the stone he thought he

had lost.

Nico gently squeezed it.

It had come back to him again.

It was the bloodstone that Aurora had taken from the casket in the Holy Land. It was the stone of the ancient legend, said to be able to save the islands and left behind by the Prophet.

It was something that would undergo a transformation if it came into contact with a new savior.

Nico couldn't feel anything but a faint, comfortable vibration, but there was no doubt that it held a great and special power. That kind of bloodstone had once again returned to his paw.

"That's right, Raven, you were probably able to see the hole leading to the fairy world because you were holding this."

"I wonder if this stone was mined from here."

"Why do you think that?"

"Well, it is just a hunch. I just suddenly remembered that the "Master of the Islands" is said to possess a jewel, is all."

I see, thought Nico as he folded his arms.

If it's the Master's jewel, then it's likely that it would hold special magical power. Besides, this island was said to be the Master's island and he had to agree that it had had an effect on Raven here.

"Yes, that might be true. In any case.....thanks for picking it up for me,

Raven."

Nico started to put away the bloodstone in the seam of his necktie. However, his paw slipped and he dropped it.

Then, it began to roll away along the slanted ground.

"Ah!"

Nico started to go after it in a panic, but the spherical bloodstone rapidly rolled away.

"Uwaaa, wait for me!"

"Mr. Nico!"

Raven also hurriedly chased after him but, probably due to having let go of the bloodstone, he couldn't see his surroundings very well.

The stone rolled along freely in this complex branching cave system. The decline increased rapidly, and Nico also became already unable to stop.

"Wawawawa....., ahhhh!"

Having stumbled on some pebbles by his feet, Nico started to fall forward, and at that same moment, Raven tripped over him.

The pair were flung seemingly into space.

We're going to fall, thought Nico as he shut his eyes.

He felt that a long time had passed before their bodies hit the ground with a thud, but that was probably a delusion.

In addition, what they fell on wasn't the hard rocky ground, but a place where

fluffy grass grew thickly and abundantly.

Taken aback, Nico got up.

Looking around, he saw that they were in a grasslands where a gentle wind blew.

Next to him, Raven also stood up. He surveyed their surroundings as if surprised.

Then, he suddenly dropped his line of sight to a patch of grass and picked up a small globe.

It was a dark green jewel which contained a deep red, the bloodstone.

"I wonder if this thing showed us the way."

Nico muttered as he took it into his paws once more.

"I wonder where this is. Is this the Blue Mens' nest?"

"We're probably in the domain of the Master's dream."

Raven stood up. Then he held his hand out towards Nico.

While holding that hand, Nico thought. This was the third person whose hand he had taken.

"As I thought, Mr. Nico is dependable."

Nico remembered the time when, long ago, a young Aurora had gotten lost and appeared among the mountains where Nico lived. Taking that hand, Nico went with her to her village.

Lydia appeared on the same mountain.

Having lost her way in the same manner, she appeared in front of Nico while crying. Once again, Nico went down the mountain with her.

If he just waited, someone would come for him.....

Since who knows when and for what reason did Nico wait, but it may have been for humans like them.

When Nico held hands with Aurora or Lydia, his loneliness disappeared.

Even if he were to pass away, the days he spent with Aurora would remain vividly within Nico.

They couldn't be together forever. However, Nico kept his memories with humans close to him forever.

And now, Raven was gripping Nico's paw.

"Which way should we go?"

Like a lost child, he tilted his head to one side in doubt.

"Let's see, probably.....this way!"

Nico had vaguely pointed in a direction, but Raven gave him a look of trust and nodded.

* * *

What seemed like a grotto was actually a vast underground cavern. Formed by seawater that had flowed in, a lake stretched out as far as one could see. Edgar and the others walked along its shore.

Above them, a rocky ceiling hung over them. There wasn't a single blade of grass around them, only a rocky surface that continued for some time.

They had come in quite far from the cove where the Blue Mens' ship had landed. However, they couldn't tell whether or not they were close to the entrance of the Master's dream.

Was it okay to keep continuing along the shore of the lake like this?

"Earl, what could that be?"

Paul pointed at a narrow path that stretched out towards the middle of the lake. Rock had gradually risen out of the lake and extended outward, forming a sort of path.

"It seems like there's something ahead. Can you see it?"

"It's the Standing Stone," Fergus answered.

Now that he said so, the single boulder really did look like it was standing straight.

"Is that the entrance?"

Muttering this, Edgar broke into a run. However after he had advanced a bit, he suddenly stopped and turned around to look back at Fergus.

Naturally, Paul and Fergus followed after him.

"I'll be troubled if you always come along with me, you know."

"Like I care! You're the one who won't untie the rope."

As he finished speaking, Edgar withdrew the Merrow's Sword.

"Wha- what are you..."

Edgar cut the rope with one clean stroke, causing Fergus to stagger and fall backwards with his eyes open wide.

".....Why you, don't look down on me!!"

"I just did as you wanted, though. With this, you're now free so please hurry up and go wherever you'd like."

Edgar took off running again. Paul followed behind him. But Fergus wouldn't let them go so easily.

"If you say I can go where I want, then I'll keep an eye on you. I won't turn a blind eye to you getting involved with the Master, because I don't want to let Lydia near a person who does that."

Edgar didn't care, and ran towards the Standing Stone.

As he got closer, he was able to clearly see what it really was. It was a black

slab of rock that stood upright by itself.

Edgar grasped the legendary sword tightly.

"Hey, wait! If that's the entrance, then only those who were invited can enter. If you destroy it, you'll become a captive ghost just like Blue Men!"

Fergus grabbed Edgar's arm and tried to restrain it.

"Don't get in my way."

"I don't want to become a ghost!"

"That's why I let you go."

"....Let's think of a gentler method! I didn't think you were this reckless!"

Even if this was reckless, there was no way that Edgar would be invited by the 'Master of the Islands.'" If he wanted to enter, he had no choice but to do so by force.

He flung Fergus aside. Fergus lost his footing on the rock and fell into the lake.

Edgar raised the sword above his head in preparation to strike.

"Edgar, stop!!"

Lydia's voice rang out clearly.

Edgar looked around, but couldn't see her anywhere.

"Lydia, are you there?"

"Please stop.....if you do something like that, you'll definitely die."

It seemed as if the voice was coming from beyond the Standing Stone.

"Over there huh..... Are you inside the Master's dream?"

"You shouldn't come over here. Edgar, there's no longer any reason for you to obtain the medicine, right? Return to London. There are plenty of suitable women for you there."

Edgar gently stroked the jet black surface of the stone. On its smooth, polished face, his own image was faintly reflected. While gazing at it, Edgar felt that Lydia was doing the same and touching the stone on the other side.

She must also be imagining Edgar in the same way.

When they met within a dream, if he searched for her, then she would answer him, even if a bit awkwardly. In this way, he could be certain that her heart was close to him.

Despite all this, had she really fallen in love with Fergus after all?

"Hey, stop doing such foolish things."

"Even if it seems foolish, it's fine. I want to redeem myself. After all, I hurt you."

"I.....haven't gotten hurt at all."

"I tricked you and left you. At that time, I think you were considerably disappointed in me. It's alright, no matter who you choose to stay beside, I want to obtain the medicine. My Lydia, please let me grant the wish which you asked of me back then."

Edgar hardened his resolve, then gripped the sword once more.

"Lydia, get away from the stone!"

Fergus' voice rang out once more, trying to get Edgar to stop, but Edgar swung the sword.

At that moment, the waters of the lake suddenly began to swell.

The waves rose higher and higher and fell upon the Standing Stone.

Edgar thought he felt the feedback from when the sword smashed the stone's base, but the impact from colliding into the mass of water was so great that Edgar lost consciousness.

Chapter 6: On the banks of spring water

"You are not welcomed here."

Within the darkness, someone spoke.

"The dreamland's entrance made this decision, so the water rushed forth to you only. But it's the dreamland, this dreamland itself chose to let you enter....."

The voice seemed to echo directly from his mind. Edgar wanted to move, but he didn't have the strength, and was unable to open his eyes.

The sound of rushing water could be heard by his ears, as if he were lying by the shore.

"It must be because you had once protected the Master's island."

"I protected..... the Master's island?"

His lips could only move slightly.

"You drove off that English impostor."

These words made him remember. This was a voice he had once heard before.

"Are you the little boy from that time?.....you lead me to the shaman's place, right?"

"Because I wanted to know what your goal was."

"After finding out, do you feel that you should have killed me?"

"The only thing I can do is understand. I cannot kill you nor can I save you,

because I already no longer exist in this world.”

Whether the person was still dead or alive, wouldn't they have the same existence by the Master's side?

“Are you the Blue Knight Earl? Or are you the Prince of Calamity? I wanted to understand this matter, but in the end, I still do not know.”

“Regardless of who I am, I cannot act according to your wishes.”

“Now, I am only the Master's dream, and since the Master does not have any expectations, then I am the same. But I believe that it would be nice for the people's expectations of the Master's image to not have any changes.”

“The people's expectations..... it's the Master who continues to be in a deep sleep?”

“Yes.”

Then, the young boy's presence suddenly vanished.

At the same time, Edgar's eyes sensed light.

Lydia's voice resounded from the side.

She must be looking at me.

Soft hair cascaded down and tickled the side of his ears.

“Hang in there, Edgar!”

Lydia called out several times to Edgar, who laid on the grass, but he was unresponsive.

She gazed at him, stroked his cheek, and felt the temperature was much colder than usual.

She was worried whether or not he was breathing, and so moved her face closer.

As a result, his body suddenly moved, and his lips came across Lydia's face.

"Wah!"

Lydia was surprised and hastily sat up.

While lying down, he opened his eyes. His ash mauve eyes were fixed on Lydia, as if he saw something dazzling, and then he smiled in satisfaction.

"Ahh, it's the usual Lydia."

Merely seeing him like that, Lydia's cheeks began to warm up. She was worried that her thumping heartbeat could be heard, so she retreated back in embarrassment.

But even if she maintained a distance that she was comfortable with, it was meaningless. Edgar sat up and quickly leaned over, covering Lydia's hand with his.

"The matter from last time should have been a dream."

The matter from last time referred to breaking up.

".....Although it was a dream, it was true."

"I don't intend on breaking up with you."

Even though she tried to withdraw her hand, Edgar wouldn't let go.

“Hey, don’t be absurd. It was fortunate that you were able to come here, but if that wasn’t the case, you could have died.”

Lydia tried to change the subject.

“And you? Were you worried about me?”

“W--well.....”

“You don’t hate me..... I can believe it as such.”

“I had hoped that you wouldn’t take risks for me anymore, but I heard that you boarded the Blue Mens’ ghost ship, so I hurriedly went into the dream..... Kelpie came as well.”

“Kelpie? Where is he?”

“Um, he can’t enter this place. In short, after looking nearby, I saw the Standing Stone on the hill and heard your voice after approaching..... and then you suddenly appeared here.”

He reached out and embraced Lydia’s head gently.

“As long as I do this, I can really feel you, but you’re actually an existence of the dream, right?”

As his body practically seemed to lose strength, Lydia hastily pushed him away.

I am no longer Edgar’s fiancée. I must make him give up on finding the antidote.

But even if he was rejected, Edgar didn’t mind it. He may have thought that Lydia was just being shy like usual.

He stood up, and naturally held out his hand to help her up.

Edgar's movements were as soft as the flowing air, he treated Lydia like a princess but also as a cherished lover. When she noticed this, her mood was unable to calm down. As Edgar extended his hand, she took it without the slightest hesitation.

I am not his fiancée anymore.

While she took a step forward, Lydia warned herself and let go of his hand.

Edgar merely glanced at her, but didn't say a word.

After leaving the lone upright stone which stood in the middle of the fields, the scenery was all the same no matter where they looked, such that no matter which direction they headed, they were unable to distinguish it. The flat earth that was covered in grass continued on without end.

The sky was very blue, and the clean air was refreshing.

The Master's dreamland didn't appear to have anything that would frighten people, but this place only had broad monotonous scenery, which made people feel a little lonely.

"Where are we going?"

After walking for a while, Lydia finally felt suspicious and raised a question.

"I'm going to find the Master's springwater, as long as you drink the water

that comes from there, your injury will heal immediately.”

“Even if you find it, it can’t be obtained. Since this place is a dream created by the Master, the things of this dream cannot be brought back to the real world.”

“As long as the Master is awake, won’t his dreams be connected to the real world?”

“No, if that happens, the islands would be in disorder.”

“No matter what, as long as I am alive, the islands’ disaster won’t disappear, and the Unseelie Courts will continue to possess strength. Besides, the islands were already in chaos because of disease and famine, isn’t that so?”

“The situation now is already quite severe, and it will become worse.”

“Are they not suffering through the consequences of their mistakes?”

Edgar spoke with a harsh tone, different from before.

He stopped and looked at Lydia.

“Lydia, we can’t sympathize with the McKeel clan. We already agreed on this. I really do possess the Prince’s memories, but I don’t intend on making this island a stronghold for the Unseelie Courts, nor do I plan on challenging the royal family. The remaining problems should be resolved by the inhabitants of the islands.”

He suddenly pulled Lydia and embraced her tightly.

He embraced Lydia so tightly that it gave her a shock.

“However, they deceived you, deceived us, and got us involved.”

Lydia’s face had no other choice but to tightly press against his chest, and was practically unable to breathe.

He had always been very gentle. He would clearly hold Lydia softly, but now he hugged her as if he was unable to keep calm.

This unyielding embrace disturbed Lydia’s heart more than usual.

"We only want to leave this place, and purely took the necessary actions for this purpose. Even if it brings the McKeel clan trouble as a result, we’re both in the same boat, aren’t we?”

“.....Edgar.....”

Even though Lydia wanted to properly feel him and embrace him if possible, she still tried to dispel these thoughts.

“Our wishes are not identical to that of the McKeel clan’s. If we wanted to do anything, we can only find ways to retreat and not interfere with each other, can’t we? I don’t think it’s good as long as they are sacrificed, but is it right for us to become the victims? This is unfair.”

“Edgar..... even if you obtain the medicine, I won’t take it, so getting it is meaningless, correct?”

“You might want to take it.”

“No.....”

“Because you haven’t escaped from my embrace.”

Lydia was surprised. She didn’t know when Edgar relaxed his strength but her body still leaned on him.

While she was pondering what to do, a kiss suddenly fell on her ear.

His hand caressed Lydia’s neck, and she lifted her head at his action. And so, a series of kisses fell on her cheeks and eyes.

She already decided that she wanted to break up with him, and that she couldn’t do these things anymore.

Although Lydia thought that, she didn’t have the strength to push him away. She felt her lips overlapping with his and couldn’t help but close her eyes.

He still embraced Lydia tightly.

The tender yet passionate kiss made her feel at a loss.

“Stop.....”

Despite wanting to say more, her words were immediately sealed once more. Her lips were gently bitten, then overlapped again after parting.

“We’re already.....”

“You still love me.”

Edgar touched Lydia’s cheek, whispering with a very confident expression.

“It’s not like that.”

“If you had been unfaithful and fell in love with another man, then you wouldn’t have accepted me like that. The only one you promised to kiss was me, saying things such as liking Fergus is a lie.”

“.....That’s not it.”

After barely managing to escape from Edgar’s embrace, Lydia pressed her neck.

The kiss mark left by Fergus remained on the surface. Every time Lydia saw the mark and remembered, it would disturb her heart.

She felt humiliated at herself, and thought that she already lost the qualities to say that she loved Edgar like before.

“Didn’t I say this before? I..... I am not a sincere girl that deserves your love. so, it’s not only you.....I also made Fergus kiss me.”

Edgar shook his head, like he wasn’t convinced.

“He forced you.”

“.....The mark has remained for a long time..... and this wasn’t forced. Every time I see him, my chest gets really hot. Even though it wasn’t your kiss, I also.....”

Edgar stared at her neck attentively. Although Lydia didn’t understand what he was thinking, she felt that there was no harm in him being disappointed in her.

Rain drops gently fell on her face.

She didn't know when the clouds covered the sky. The raindrops fell continuously, drenching Lydia's eyelashes, lips, and hair.

"Let's find a place where we can take shelter from the rain."

Edgar looked up at the sky and turned around silently.

*

When Fergus came to, he had already been washed up to the lakeshore. The young person named Paul was also lying nearby, but as he yelled out, Paul regained consciousness.

Neither of them were hurt.

However, Earl Ashenbert disappeared.

Paul hastily ran along the lakeside, trying to see whether or not the Earl was sent ashore somewhere.

Fergus sat on the ground, not intending to help Paul.

The stones that suddenly appeared and joined to create a slender pathway extended to the centre of the lake like before, and a Standing Stone towered ahead.

Although the distance was too far to see clearly, there didn't seem to be traces of damage.

Maybe Edgar's sword wasn't able to destroy the Standing Stone.

Soon after, there was a big wave heading towards him.

Because Edgar was an unwelcome guest to the Master, he ought to have sank down to the bottom of the lake by now.

Or was there a possibility that he was alive and entered the other side of the stone?

Was it possible that he was together with Lydia?

Despite Fergus finding it difficult to believe, he felt that Edgar was alive.

Whether it's the "Master" or the "Prince of Calamity", I can't sever the relationship between Lydia and that guy. Having these kinds of thoughts is truly unfathomable.

Even though he clearly wanted to obtain Lydia, he also felt that he couldn't beat Edgar no matter what.

Even with the kiss in the dream, Lydia still used her whole body to accept Edgar, using her own skin and blood to sense him.

Fergus didn't understand that sort of love, and had never loved a woman in that way.

He was just about to sigh when someone from behind him sighed first.

Paul seemed to have already circled the lake and came back depressed.

He sat the same way as Fergus did, held his head and didn't move.

"Hey, you spoke of the Earl's vengeance, what's that about?"

Paul was said to be the Earl's friend, so questions were bubbling forth from Fergus to this young man.

"This isn't a subject I should speak of."

"Had that guy always been fighting with Prince until now? Doesn't he belong to that organisation, and then became the Prince's successor? He hid everything from Lydia, so....."

"No, Miss Lydia already knew about the Earl's past and suffering and is fully willing to stay by his side."

Paul seemed a little angry as he used a firm tone to say this.

Fergus felt that this was unbelievable.

Paul looked like a very kind-hearted man.

He said that he supported Edgar, who was indifferent in selling his soul to the devil, and despite Fergus listening to Paul, baffled, why was Paul so loyal to Edgar?

"Are you like Lydia as well? Knowing all of the Earl's past and sufferings."

"Well, I don't understand to that extent, but the Earl had helped me several times in the past. He is someone I am proud of."

“Proud huh. He wants me to be one of his servants. Of course, I am an eyesore of a man who wants to take Lydia away from him, and I know full well that he loathes me, but at least a gentleman will keep up his appearance.”

Paul looked at Fergus in dubiousness.

“The Earl saved you.”

“Is it because of him that I didn’t become bones at the bottom of the ship? Hmph, if he wanted to save me, then he would have immediately untied the rope. If that was the case, then even I would know to be thankful.”

“If he released you immediately, you would have become a slave of the Blue Men again. Even now, if they saw that you had been freed, it will be bad.”

Paul’s words made Fergus widen his eyes.

“What! Is that true?”

Fergus subconsciously stood up and looked at a distant place towards the curved lakeshore, then hastily hid behind a rock.

“It’s them!”

“What?”

Fergus pulled Paul behind the rock, whilst explaining quickly.

“It’s the Blue Men, if we’re found we’ll become bones.”

“I don’t think that we’ll become bones right away.”

How is that any better?

“Think of a way to drive them out.”

“B--but, I’m not different compared to the Earl’s belongings.....”

If Edgar wasn’t here, will the two be taken away as servants?

While they were talking, the Blue Men had already come close, and they could hear rustling sounds.

They seemed to be responding to the large waves and the cavern’s vibrations, and came to see what was going on.

If this continued on, they would be discovered.

“Wh..What do we do?”

“We can only run.”

Fergus started running, and Paul hastily followed behind him.

(Hey, it’s those humans.)

They were immediately noticed by the Blue Men.

(Master isn’t here, they’re both slaves.)

(So it doesn’t matter if we capture them?)

“You’ve got to be kidding me.”

Fergus whispered as he ran into a narrow cave.

They continued to run into the depths of the cavern, but the Blue Men chased after them, unwilling to give up.

“There’s two routes!”

If they hit a dead end, then it would be over.

“Over here!”

At that moment, there was a sound of a woman’s voice.

“Lota?”

Paul followed the sound and Fergus followed him from behind. There was Lota waving at them.

“You know Lota?”

“What, you too?”

“Over here, you two. If you go up, you’ll be able to exit.”

“Ahh, the Blue Men are still chasing us.”

Paul called out anxiously after looking back.

“Fergus, aren’t you the clan head’s son? You should know how to get rid of them.”

“I know, but I don’t know!”

“What’s that supposed to mean?!”

Fergus and Lota ran while arguing.

“It’s possible as long as you say the “finishing blow words!” But I don’t know what they are.”

“Hah? That’s not helpful!”

“It seems to be a rhyme. That’s all I know.”

“A rhyme.....what’s that?”

Lota tilted her head.

“Well..... in short, I’m not an expert in poetry.”

“Poetry? Paul, I remember that you were good at writing poetry.”

“What, um..... no, I don’t have any talent.”

“Hey, Fergus, do the “finishing blow words” require talent?”

“I don’t know, you’d probably need a destructive force.”

“You heard him, Paul.”

“What? Shouldn’t it be fine as long as you’re creative.....?”

“There’s no choice but to try it!”

Despite everyone still running, they had reached a verdict. Everyone’s fate rested on Paul; he was already gasping for breath to begin with, but now, his face seemed paler.

“Hurry up and think of something!”

Fergus saw the distance between them and the Blue Men shortening, thus he urged Paul.

Paul made up his mind and stopped running.

He was face to face with the Blue Men, who were in pursuit. It was at this time that he wanted to say something.

A ray of light shone from above.

There seemed to be a hole above which lead directly to the surface, so perhaps it was because the clouds suddenly dispersed that the sunlight shone directly into the cave.

They hastily turned away while colliding and entangling with each other as they left.

After the Blue Men disappeared in front of Paul, the noise they created in the cave also stopped.

“You did it, Paul! You’re amazing!”

Lota hugged Paul, who was dumbstruck.

“I haven’t said anything.....”

Paul muttered, leaning against the rock wall powerlessly. Fergus found this very funny, as he sat on the ground and laughed aloud.

*

A flash cut through the sky, and the vibrating atmosphere like sound immediately echoed. Lydia couldn't help but cover her ears and shut her eyes.

"The sky is getting brighter now, the rain will definitely stop soon."

Edgar said this while looking out the window. In reality, it was merely a square-shaped hole dug out from a wall that he walked away from and sat on a chair slightly apart from Lydia.

Not long after it started raining, they found a lone house in the middle of the prairies. This stone house had a straw roof, and seemed to be an ancient structure, but there was no one inside.

This was the "Master's" dreamland, so humans couldn't live here. That being said, it was surprising that this place had a cabin. Lydia couldn't help but feel that this came from the Master's kindness.

Or was it that the Master intended on trapping them here in order to stop them from finding the spring water?

Perhaps the rain won't stop.

Ever since Lydia told Edgar that she was kissed by Fergus, he had kept a certain distance from her.

Lydia felt that this was no longer a distance between lovers.

“Are you cold?”

He was still concerned about Lydia, and his gaze towards her wasn't cold at all. However, this place clearly only had two people in it, and yet he sat in an area where he couldn't reach her.

“Yeah..... you're more important. My body isn't here.”

“Yes, but I don't feel cold nor hot, probably because this isn't the real world.”

Lydia suppressed her sadness and exposed a smile.

She told herself that this was okay. It was Lydia who suggested breaking up, and perhaps Edgar would give up on finding the antidote.

“After the rain lessens, I'm going to leave.”

However, he said this.

“Wh--where are you going?”

“Of course it is to find the spring water. You have to return immediately to the place you're staying at..... when I find the antidote, I will ask someone to give this to you. Even if you don't take it, that's up to you, it's not necessary for you to act according to a goal that I agreed upon without permission.”

Lydia couldn't help but stand up.

“Why? Even though I said I wasn't going to take it, you still insist on obtaining it?”

“Yes.”

Edgar nodded calmly with a lonely face.

“Are you shocked? You think that I arbitrarily said that it won’t matter even if the islands are faced with a crisis?”

Even so, his eyes didn’t tremble in the slightest.

“But this is me.”

As long as it is something that needed to be protected, he would do whatever it takes. This was Edgar. Lydia thought that perhaps this was because he was an aristocrat.

Even the McKeel clan head who was leading, he thought that for the sake of its people, sacrificing Lydia cannot be helped.

Edgar fought for the same reason. It wasn’t for himself, nor was it for the world, rather it was for someone he decided to protect, so he fought alone.

Merely speaking pleasant words were useless; Lydia’s words were unable to reach his heart.

Lydia wanted to stop Edgar, but it wasn’t out of consideration for the island. She just.....

“.....I don’t want you to approach the Prince even more.”

She had to say that, as she couldn’t say that she liked him.

“Yeah, I have a crisis as well, but even if it’s the Prince, I plan on making use of him. Because if you aren’t here, it’s meaningless for me to keep on living even if I have the Prince’s memories.”

However, if Edgar stayed by Lydia’s side, he might use the Prince’s power everytime he encounters something in future.

In the end, no matter what Lydia wished for, she was unable to stop Edgar.

“So Lydia, if you miss this island and want to protect this place, it doesn’t matter to me if I disappear. If that’s the case, even if the Master is awakened, it won’t only be the Unseelie Courts who will possess power.”

Lydia anxiously approached him.

“What do you mean by disappearing? Even if you disappeared, you’d want me to take the antidote as well?”

Despite looking up at Lydia, who stood beside him, he didn’t reach out like earlier.

“If you lean this close, I’d want to strongly kiss you again.”

But he didn’t force her. The only one that Edgar liked was Lydia. However, she told him that she liked Fergus.

Even if it was so, she still received Edgar’s kiss, so wouldn’t Edgar hate her?

Lydia lowered her head shyly.

“If you can obtain happiness, then it doesn’t matter what happens to me. However, I will definitely obtain just the medicine.”

“I don’t understand, why must you do this?”

“Because I want to redeem myself.”

He had also said this when he tried to destroy the Standing Stone. He also said he would abandon Lydia, which hurt her.

However, this was done in order to save Lydia. Up until now, Lydia understood that she was simply unable to calm down at the time, and raised a fairly willful request towards him.

“There isn’t anything that you have to compensate for.”

“I really regret it, because I wasn’t able to fulfill your wishes at the time. So, my wish now is to just obtain the spring water.”

“That was just my selfishness.”

“That was your sincere selfishness, you said that you wanted to stay by my side.”

Lydia was surprised and shut her mouth.

“Perhaps the wish from that time is already no longer important to you, but if I don’t obtain the medicine, then I will become a terrible fiancé who didn’t listen to your wishes, was unable to convince you or make you feel at ease, and who deceived and abandoned you.”

Was it because of that?

No matter what the current Lydia says, Edgar won't listen. But why? Lydia finally understood; it was because she made a stronger wish in the past.

Compared to the current request of wanting to stop Edgar, her frame of mind at the time while making a wish from the bottom of her heart was stronger, which drove Edgar.

Edgar was determined to leave Lydia behind, his mood was even more unbearable.

Even though Lydia always acted like a child towards his display of feelings, and was merely a clumsy lover, Edgar surrounded her with his huge affection. For this reason, Edgar at that time, painfully chose to make her receive treatment, believing that if there was medicine, then he simply had to get ahold of it.

The Lydia who did not understand love, chose the option of breaking up for Edgar's sake, but to him, this held no meaning.

No matter who Lydia's heart was with, Edgar was merely trying to achieve the wish that she truly made to herself.

Even though she realized his determination, Lydia still didn't know what to do. She just stood there motionless, holding her trembling hands at her chest.

Edgar stood up and hesitated as he reached out to Lydia. But he lowered his hand halfway and said:

"I should get going."

Lydia had no choice but to stare at his back as he opened the slanted wooden

door.

It was still raining outside the cabin, and beams of light would occasionally appear in the sky. And yet, Edgar left by himself.

From now on, I won't see him anymore?

I don't want that.

But Lydia couldn't stop Edgar.

She hoped that this would be Edgar's last time approaching the Prince and encountering danger, so she couldn't pursue him.

.....Was that really the case?

No, I am merely afraid of the Prince.

Edgar believed that even though he obtained power from the Prince, he would also be able to turn it into the Blue Knight Earl's power and try to fight. But this was clearly a very reckless action, and may incur an unfortunate result.

.....If it's like that, then I can only fall with him together.

Regardless of the things he shouldered or the results that were incurred, I can only bear it with him together.

If we can't obtain happiness together, then it will be meaningless.

I must go with him.

Lydia still hadn't responded to the love he showed.

Edgar was trying to obtain the thing that Lydia wished for from the bottom of her heart, but she tried to escape, and this was wrong.

What she ought to do isn't to stop Edgar.

"Edgar!"

No matter what happens, no matter what he does, I'm going to stay by his side. If this is his only wish.....

"Edgar, wait!"

Lydia ran in the rain and chased after Edgar.

After he noticed her, he stopped and turned around.

Lydia ran while feeling confused.

Can I embrace him? I told him that I liked Fergus, would he consider me a frivolous woman?

Because she thought too much, her initial vigor became weak. Just when she was about to stop in front of Edgar, the thunder rumbled loudly.

"Ah!"

She hugged Edgar immediately.

Although she immediately came to her senses and tried to get away, Edgar's arm tightly embraced her waist.

".....Please take me back!"

I won't be able to say it if I hesitate. Lydia took the opportunity to speak.

Although it was only a brief moment, his silence scared Lydia. Lydia felt his gaze stopping around her neck, and recalled that there was a kiss mark on her neck, so that place started to burn up.

It was only Lydia's consciousness here now, so it was impossible to see the mark. Her mind clearly thought this, but Edgar frowned as if he saw it.

“Are you willing to choose me again?”

Although he said this in a gentle tone, the Lydia now was already no longer the same as the Lydia before who asked him to take her back.

Lydia herself hadn't changed, but to Edgar, she was already different. As soon as Lydia thought this, she became more afraid.

“Do you hate me?”

She asked, panic-stricken. After all, she said that she liked someone else, would it be too late now?

“How could I hate you.....? You choosing me who is like this, is it possible?”

He embraced her tightly.

Despite this, Lydia still felt that he was a little apprehensive.

The reason why he controlled the kisses on Lydia's forehead, was it because he was worried that she would take back her words from just now? Or were there ill-feelings existing in Edgar?

However, I want to stay by his side. Lydia was no longer confused.

If Edgar was planning to obtain the antidote, then even if he was a little disappointed in Lydia, and even if he didn't love Lydia like before, as long as he didn't say that he didn't need her, she would follow him.

The rain soon stopped and the clear sky appeared again. Edgar and Lydia walked in the prairies endlessly.

They really didn't have a goal. While walking, Edgar noticed a strange phenomenon.

A floating cloud wasn't anything strange, but the clouds seemed to be floating in a radial motion. Upon carefully looking, one would notice that the clouds seemed to be coming out from a point in the sky.

Was that the centre of the Master's dreamland?

If that was the case, then the spring water, which was said to be the source of the dreamland, was definitely nearby.

He realized he was holding hands and looked at Lydia. As their gazes met, she smiled.

Edgar never wanted to let go of Lydia again.

Although Edgar couldn't help but want to hold her tightly, he was as gentle as possible as he pulled her hand along.

He was planning to be like a lover holding hands for the first time and start over from the beginning with Lydia. He hoped that Lydia would be able to slowly have eyes for only him again.

Even though he urgently wanted to get back to the distance they were once at, if the uneasiness still remained in her heart, perhaps she would recall the feelings of preferring Fergus previously. Edgar was afraid that this would happen.

As long as he wasn't hasty, he will surely be able to take Lydia back.

She was unconditionally a little sad regarding Fergus' matter. Even if he had to spend some time, Edgar was going to make Lydia forget him.

"Edgar, look over there."

Lydia pointed ahead.

Her cheeks flushed red and she blinked incessantly, as if she found something. Watching her like this really was too cute.

"Hey, what are you looking at? It's over there."

Puzzled, Lydia's face grew even redder, as she was pointing at something. She truly was cute.

"Edgar....."

"Is that thing worth more of my attention than you?"

"Ugh, seriously?!"

Although Lydia with puffed out cheeks was very cute, Edgar turned to look in order to not go too far in provoking her anger.

Upon gazing at the grasslands that was only at the horizon, a hazy rock could be seen.

The place where clouds seemed to be rushing forth from was beneath that rock.

Edgar and Lydia exchanged a glance, and then started running.

After closing in, they discovered the rock was so large that they had to look up. It was an egg-shaped rock, and would probably need a few minutes to circle around.

The dreamland's egg. Did the Master's island boundaries emerge from here? This thought came to mind.

"Is this the source of the dreamland?"

"But I heard that it took the form of a gemstone."

The surface of the rock appeared to be like that of an ordinary stone, moreover, there wasn't any spring water.

"Edgar, there's a big crack over here."

Edgar went over to where Lydia shouted at, and saw a split crack on top of the egg-shaped rock.

The width of crack was enough to be able to let humans enter, and it seemed to lead into the inside of the rock.

"Let's go in and have a look."

After walking several steps towards the inside, the scenery before them suddenly changed.

The walls were like polished mirrors, which reflected Lydia and Edgar's appearances.

The inside and outside of the rock were completely different, as the inside was made up of a black rock.

“.....Onyx.....?”

The glossy black surface was like a mirror, as their appearances were reflected in many layers.

“Edgar, this is the Master’s gemstone.”

Edgar realized that Lydia wasn’t beside him. He could hear her voice and see her figure a little, but it was all an image reflected from the mirrors.

“Lydia, where are you?”

“What.....? Oh no, are you not there, Edgar?”

The cracks extended into the rocks intricately, and sounds would echo, making Edgar unable to find out where Lydia was.

“Don’t move, I’ll come to you.”

“Got it.”

Edgar concentrated on his gaze and tried to find Lydia’s figure that was reflected in the agate. He thought that he seemed to catch a glimpse of her caramel colored hair.

Although his eyes hastily tried to followed it, he lost sight of it. But at this time, Edgar stopped, where he was, because he noticed one side of the rock wall faintly reflecting scenery that this place didn’t have.

What on earth is that?

He tried hard to see it clearly, and found that there were several swaying figures.

The depths of the black stone wall and the figures combined into one area; it seemed to be a chapel.

The men and women dressed in black clothes were weeping at the coffin.

Is that a funeral? Whose is it?

Edgar was pulled into that mirage while he was in a daze, and felt himself walking towards the coffin.

As he walked, he tried to find people that he knew among the attendees, but he couldn't see anyone's faces clearly.

There was a person beside the coffin who looked towards him. He could only see that face clearly.

Professor Carlton.....

Don't tell me.

"It's your fault."

The professor spoke, blaming Edgar.

"Didn't you..... vow that you would protect her?"

Lydia..... because of me.....

"And yet, that child even said that she'd fall together with you..... she was merely taken advantage of by you."

Taken advantage? How ridiculous.

He tried to run towards the coffin, but the image disappeared in this moment.

This was just an illusion. Edgar tried to think that. Or was this the Master's desire? Perhaps the Master wanted to drive away the unwanted intruders.

In short, he wanted to get to her side. Edgar worriedly tread forward.

However, the onyx rock wall drew Edgar's attention again.

The chapel appeared before his eyes again, but the atmosphere was different from before. Edgar saw Lydia's back in the chapel.

Lydia was wearing a wedding dress, but the man beside her wasn't Edgar.

He could see that the man had red hair and wore a Scottish kilt.

Fergus?

Lydia looked at him, revealing a happy smile.

She lightly shut her eyes, waiting for the kiss of oath.

That should be an expression that she had only shown to Edgar. No, had Fergus already seen it?

What on earth is this vision? Was it an illusion that the "Master" wanted to show him? Or was it showing the future?

The scene before him was like expressing Edgar's inability to bring Lydia happiness. Waiting for them would lead to an unfortunate ending, and this made him feel uneasy.

"Lydia!"

He couldn't help but call out.

But this mirage didn't seem to have the leeway for Edgar to get involved, and the image slowly faded away.

“Edgar, I’m here. Do you see me?”

Lydia’s response came, and he was able to see her figure. Despite Edgar breathing a sigh of relief, his anxiety didn’t disappear.

It would be nice if that were merely an illusion. However if it continued on like this, and he used the power of Unseelie Courts to obtain the medicine, would he really be able to make Lydia’s future bright?

“Hey Edgar, there’s light up ahead. I saw an orange light.”

“Lydia, don’t move yet.”

Lydia was probably driven by a strong curiosity, and peeped a little into the depths of the cavern.

She seemed to have moved a little, and her figure disappeared from Edgar’s field of vision again.

Edgar sped up, and took a glimpse at the orange light coming out from the depths of the onyx tunnel.

Lydia must be there. Edgar quickly moved towards the area of light.

“Is this carnelian?”

“I heard Father say that before.”

He heard Lydia’s voice.

“He said that the onyxes and carnelians belong to the same kind of chalcedony minerals. Jasper, Bloodstones, and prase are also the same, as they were precious gemstones in Scotland long ago.”

Then the egg-shaped rock that was covered in chalcedony was the source of the “Master’s” dreamland.

The magic that covered the islands, regardless of whether it was good or evil that was concentrated here, the Master created the islands as part of the human world.

If the Master awakens, the dreamland’s egg will disappear. The magic will cover the islands, creating a situation that will be hard for humans to handle.

Edgar pondered while looking around. The carnelians overlapped to form what looked like pillars, and he saw Lydia, who was in the depths of the cavern, looking up surprised.

“Lydia.”

Edgar rushed over. She noticed him too, and planned to run towards him.

At that time, a shadow suddenly fell in front of Lydia.

“Kelpie!”

“Thank god, I finally found you.”

“How come you’re able to enter?”

“I don’t know either, it’s probably because the Earl came in with the Prince’s memories, so the Master allowed everything that could possibly drive him out into here.”

After Kelpie finished speaking, he immediately turned into a dark horse. He swung his mane and Lydia sat on his back.

“What are you doing? Let go of Lydia.”

Edgar called out, but Kelpie merely gave him a quick look.

“I’m sorry Earl, but there isn’t any time left. Lydia can’t leave her body for a long time.”

“Wait, Kelpie, just a little longer. I can hear the sound of water.”

After hearing Lydia’s words, Edgar carefully listened. Indeed, he could hear a faint sound similar to water. The spring water must be nearby.

“Lydia, I’ll get the antidote at once.”

Edgar ran towards the sound of the water.

“Get the antidote? Seriously! Hey Lydia, aren’t you going to stop him?”

Kelpie’s voice reached her ears.

“It doesn’t matter, I have already decided to do things according to Edgar’s wishes.”

“It doesn’t matter if that guy becomes the Prince either?”

“Even so, if he still likes me, then I will still stay by his side.”

Even if..... he becomes the Prince?

Lydia had already considered this possibility, but was she prepared for it?

While running, the mirage that Edgar saw in the onyx caves appeared in his

mind.

As long as she stayed by Edgar's side, Lydia's future will turn out like that.....

It won't, he planned to give it his all to make her happy.

I won't become the Prince.

Pursuing the sound of the water, he passed through a space made of carnelian, and not knowing when, he arrived at the end of a path.

The sound of the water echoed all around; it sounded like it was nearby, but he didn't know where the spring water actually was.

Edgar lowered his head worriedly, and noticed that the rock by his feet became the color of deep water.

It was a bright green that would appear when light shone onto the clear and calm water.

Edgar leaned over and touched the rock that was beside his foot.

".....Is this a prase?"

It was said to be a kind of chalcedony, as well as the same kind of mineral as carnelian and onyx.

If one pressed their ear against the prase, they could seemingly hear the distant sound of water coming from the spread out bedrock beneath their feet.

Was the spring water coming out from below?

“There isn’t any spring water.”

Edgar heard a voice and turned around.

It was Fergus. He was with Paul, and Lota was also there for some reason.

“Earl, you’re okay!”

Paul was about to run over towards Edgar, but was stopped by Lota. This was because Fergus glared at Edgar as he drew his sword.

“You said that there wasn’t any more spring water, what do you mean?”

While Edgar returned Fergus’ glare with an expression full of hostility, he put his hand on his sword.

“I heard Patrick say that the spring water had already turned to stone. The Master gradually turned that strong magic into crystals, sealed it in the shell of the dreamland, then fell into a deep sleep. A long time ago, the Master made the islands and gave it to humans, like making it an agreement that it was place for humans to live in. The sound of water is a memory of the Master.”

“.....I see. But the Master’s dreamland has cracks, and the Blue Men responded to the dreamland’s crystals slowly splitting open.”

When Edgar saw the shaman, the shell of the Master’s dreamland was already completed, but perhaps that wasn’t it.

So, the Unseelie Courts took the opportunity to acquire power when the “Prince of Calamity” was born, which produced a bad influence on the islands.

This situation further weakened the powers that kept the Master asleep.

“Not everything has been turned to stone, the shell of the Master’s dreamland isn’t completed yet, if I’m not wrong. There might be spring water remaining at the bottom of this rock.

“Are you going to shatter that rock? What do we do if the Master awakens?”

“I heard that if the Master awakens, then the spring water can be obtained.”

Fergus gritted his teeth in rage.

“I will not allow you to do this. This is the island of us Highlanders!”

He rushed over.

Edgar pulled out his sword and stopped him. The iron clashed against each other.

Fergus spared no effort in pushing it over, while Edgar deflected the force and pushed the sword away. Fergus, who retreated backwards, grasped his sword once more and assumed his position.

“If it’s for Lydia, then stop this at once.”

“You still dare to speak, you clearly used despicable means to try and take her away from me.”

“I didn’t do anything despicable.....”

“You acted rudely to her, who has a fiancé, hurt her, and made her be at her wits’ end.”

Fergus was confused at first, but he raised his eyebrows as if he immediately realized it.

“Are you talking about the matter of me kissing her?If a lie to this extent could destroy your relationship with her, then that’s what you’ve just done.”

“That was..... a lie?”

“Yes, that’s right, the mark on her neck was made by someone she met in her dream. I... I said that I did it because I didn’t want Lydia to keep thinking about that guy!

In her dream?

It shouldn’t be.....

Edgar thought, would such a thing happen without touching the body in reality?

Even so, Edgar still accepted this answer immediately. He was the only one who would kiss Lydia like that.

Surely Lydia didn’t actually expect a mark to remain on her body from things that happened in a dream, so she believed Fergus’ words with certainty.

Edgar’s anger silently rose.

Lydia wasn’t moved by Fergus at all, it was merely because she didn’t feel unpleasant regarding the kiss mark, and so she lost confidence in her own feelings.

But regarding the reason why she had these kinds of feelings, was it not

because she still unconsciously understood that it was a mark left by Edgar in her dream?

But it's because of that guy!

“If that’s the case, regardless of what method I use and whether or not I will make your clan perish, I’m going to take Lydia back.”

“Even if it will hurt Lydia, would you still do it? She is a fairy doctor, and is very close to the Seelie Courts, but while you say that it’s in consideration for her, you obtained the power of Unseelie Courts on the other hand. There won’t be a happy future like this no matter what you think!”

The illusion reflected from the onyx suddenly reappeared in Edgar’s mind.

Fergus took advantage of this gap and attacked. Although Edgar was slightly late, he was still able to barely avoid it.

The sword swung and hit the cornelian pillars, and the fragments suddenly scattered out and flickered an orange light.

“You’re wrong Fergus! This is my wish!”

Lydia voice intervened.

Fergus drew his sword back in astonishment.

“I beg you, please stop..... I want to be with Edgar.”

Lydia, who was sitting on Kelpie’s back, looked down from the protruding carnelian rocks.

Fergus was probably unable to see Lydia, who was an image of the dream, as

he looked all around and answered:

“Lydia, even if the Earl becomes the Prince, does that not even matter? If he destroys this place, whether he’s willing or not, he will become the Prince who will turn these islands into a lair for all kinds of evil things!”

Even if he became like that, Edgar didn’t want to make use of that position. But what if there was no other way but to use that power? He himself didn’t know.

Even the sword’s power, Edgar had originally intended on using it only once, but as long as he encountered matters that had to do with fairy magic, he couldn’t not use it.

Granted that it was like this, he didn’t want to lose Lydia. He had to obtain the spring water.

“Edgar, I’m fine.....”

Fergus tried to find Lydia and was distracted as a result. Edgar kept a distance from him as he stared at the prase by his feet. Then, he raised his sword.

“It’ll be fine..... as long as you don’t regret it.”

Regret?

Edgar couldn’t help but stop.

Do I not regret it?

“It’s your *fault*,” said the Professor.

Would he become a person who wouldn’t regret it when confronted with that kind of situation?

“And yet, that child even said that she’d fall together with you.....”

Does Lydia think that way?

Edgar couldn’t help but be shocked after realizing this.

Lydia, who suggested breaking up, had become the Lydia who changed her mind and decided to choose him once more.

Lydia hadn’t changed at all. She was willing to let Edgar kiss her, and was not tempted by other men.

Because of this, she expressed that she would follow Edgar no matter where. Whether it was bearing the fate of the one known as the “Prince” with Edgar, or drinking from the cup of sin, she was prepared to do so.

Making Lydia accomplish these conditions, would he still be able to say that this was for her?

Was it not for his own wishes?

Compared to anything else, the most important thing he should be doing is protecting Lydia. It was crazy making her prepare to bear the pain and sorrow.

Edgar lifted his sword and lost the will to fight.

Fergus noticed Edgar’s movements and thought that he was going to break the prase.

“Stop, Fergus!”

Lydia cried out. Her figure floated in the air, and Edgar saw her descending to Fergus' side.

But Fergus didn't lose his momentum and waved his sword towards Edgar, trying to stop him.

Fergus' sword had already approached Edgar's eyes, who lost the will to fight.

"Edgar!"

He heard Lydia's shriek, but he didn't have the strength to dodge. This time, another illusion appeared in his mind.

It was a wedding that Lydia greeted with a smile.

Yes, I will already no longer be in this world by then.

Thinking about it, it's fine even if it's like this. If the Master showed these illusions for me to see, and choose one, then I would rather disappear.

Sorry, Lydia.

I broke the promise of bringing you back again.

Chapter 7: Waking up from a light dream

I'm sorry, Lydia.

She felt as though she heard Edgar's voice.

You're someone who's supposed to be happy. As a fairy doctor who is loved by the fairies, you mustn't fall together with me. That's why...

No..., Edgar, don't leave me behind!

As Lydia tried to shout out, her eyes snapped open.

A mortar ceiling entered her vision. There was a small window which was shut and light from the outside which shone through the curtains lit her bed up dimly.

On top of the oak table were multiple volumes of half-read books which served to kill time.

This was the McKeels' mansion which she was used to seeing.

Lydia who woke up from the dream, wiped the perspiration off her forehead with her hand and muttered the name of the person she did not want to part with.

"Yo, so you woke up."

The curtains by the window swayed. Although the windows were still shut, Kelpie sat on the edge of the bed while resting his chin in his hands.

"If you stayed any longer in the dream, your body won't be able to wake up."

Lydia remembered that Edgar and Fergus were fighting each other in the dream.

Edgar had tried to shatter the spring which had transformed into the prase bedrock, while Fergus tried to stop him.

After that...

Lydia did not see what happened subsequently. Because Kelpie had forcibly taken Lydia away.

“Sleep. Isn’t it still difficult for you to move? Although half a day has passed since we returned, you were only finally able to regain your consciousness.”

Lydia, who tried to get up, found that she wasn’t able to move as she wanted to, just like Kelpie had said.

It appeared that her consciousness which slipped out into the dream still wasn’t accustomed to her body.

“Kelpie, what happened to Edgar?”

Even so Lydia sat half her body up and bent forward towards Kelpie.

“Beats me. Since I brought you back and returned in a hurry, I don’t know either.”

Kelpie probably took Lydia away from the scene hurriedly because he did not want to show Lydia what was going to happen to Edgar.

Lydia thought so because at that time, Edgar did not seem to try to evade or resist what was coming.

Even though Fergus was acting with such force that he would stop Edgar no matter what.

The more she thought about it the more frightened she became, and Lydia held her shoulders with both arms.

“Urgh, here comes something troublesome. See you later Lydia.”

Kelpie vanished immediately. At the same time, the one who knocked at her room door was Patrick, and Lydia hurriedly placed the gown on the bedside over herself.

“Mr Patrick, if you wish to see the young miss, please wait a little...”

Although Kelly ran in after him, Patrick came right to Lydia’s side unfazed.

“I apologise for my manner, but it was because I thought this was news that’s important to you Miss Lydia.”

“... What is it?”

“I heard that the Earl of Ashenbert is dead.”

The sense of Kelly swallowing her breath reached Lydia. Lydia froze and was unable to utter a single sound.

“Who... said such a thing?”

After some time, she was finally able to speak out in a feeble voice.

“Fergus returned to the clan chief’s mansion a while back. Although I heard that Fergus had proceeded to the straits on his own judgement in order to stop Lord Ashenbert from destroying the Master’s dream, it seems like many things happened on that small island in the straits. In any case, the dream of the “Master of the Islands” has been protected.”

It was what Lydia had seen while she took the form of a dream. If that’s the case, there could only be one conclusion.

“Was Fergus the one who... Edgar?”
She felt fearful as she put it into words.

If Edgar had received Fergus’ sword in that defenceless manner. As Lydia imagined that scene, she trembled.

“He had fought for the islands as the next clan chief of the McKeels. That’s all there is to it.”

“I don’t... want to hear such things.”

“If it had been Fergus who died, would you be able handle this without feeling sad?”

“... You say terrible things.”

She did not wish for them to fight. It was precisely because Lydia couldn’t wish for Fergus’ death or hate him that she desperately tried to stop them.

But Lydia, who was nothing more than a figure in the dream, was unable to interfere with Fergus.

Even though she was able to touch Edgar.

It must be because Edgar was the only one whom Lydia was able to touch with her soul.

Unconsciously, Lydia touched her neck with her hand.

Fergus said that he lied.

This was a mark left by Edgar in that dream then.

Strangely, Lydia was able to accept it easily. She understood why she became fraught with emotions when she thought about this.

To Lydia, it was always only Edgar. Until now, and from now on.

Yet, Edgar is...

"... I don't believe you."

Lydia muttered.

"Mr Patrick, you intend to deceive me again don't you?"

Patrick, while still looking quiet and keeping his emotions hidden, spoke again.

"The Earl has given up, be it to obtain the medicine or to bring you back. In doing so, he had probably decided to bury Prince together with himself. With his pride as the Blue Knight Earl."

That was probably why he had said sorry to Lydia. At that time, Edgar did appear to be resigned.

Even so, I don't want to believe it.

"Fergus he... what is he doing?"

"He feels that he is unable to meet you now."

That was probably why Patrick had come to inform her.

Lydia fell silent while keeping her head down.

When Patrick left, Lydia went out of the mansion alone. As she walked along the cape absent-mindedly, she thought only about Edgar.

"You mustn't fall together with me..."

At the last moment, Edgar gave up on using the magic of the Unseelie Courts. He, who tried to fulfil his promise with Lydia even if he had to use Prince's memories, for the sake of his vow to protect Lydia, a vow which was more important than that promise, Edgar was resigned to a farewell.

Perhaps he had decided not to drag Lydia into what he had ended up shouldering.

It was always Edgar, not Lydia, who was truly bearing with painful feelings.

Lydia couldn't do anything in the end.

She wasn't able to part from him. Even her decision to stay by his side was not one that would protect him. She still wasn't able to reciprocate the love he had given her either.

While receiving the sea breeze with her being, Lydia found it unbelievable that she wasn't shedding tears.

I wonder if it's true that even after my wounds have healed, I won't be able to meet Edgar anymore.

I still can't believe it in the least bit.

If so, I must verify it with my own eyes.

Lydia was still Edgar's fiancée. Even if they were not married, she should still be in the position to verify his fate, since he did not have any blood relations.

Once she thought that, she turned around abruptly and ran off.

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When he glanced towards the top of the carnelian rock, Edgar met Kelpie's eyes.

As though he sensed Edgar's intention, Kelpie forcefully took Lydia away and disappeared. At the same time, Edgar lowered his arm which held the sword.

He simply watched Fergus as Fergus raised his sword and came at him.

It was not as though he wanted to die. It was only that, when he thought about how there was no longer anything left he could do for Lydia's sake, Edgar could not even gather the will to avoid the sword.

At that moment, a black figure jumped in before his eyes.

In the next moment, Fergus sword was parried off and flew up into the air.

“Raven...”

The brown-skinned youth, unfazed by the blood that flowed from his arms which was seemingly grazed by the tip of the blade, stepped forward swiftly towards Fergus who had lost his weapon.

As Raven beat up Fergus’ shocked face, Fergus, who was more well-built than Raven, fumbled and fell to the ground on his behind.

“Raven, that’s enough!”

Although Edgar hurriedly stopped Raven, surprisingly, Raven backed off calmly with a “Yes.”

Somehow it seemed like Raven had no intention of beating Fergus up any more than that. Lately, Raven had come to understand what it means to go easy on someone.

“Lord Edgar, apologies for my late arrival.”

After checking that Fergus was not going to stand up, Raven turned towards Edgar.

“How did you come here?”

“Mr. Nico brought me.”

In the shadows behind, Nico swayed his tail.

Edgar undid his necktie and tied it around Raven’s arm which was covered in blood.

“Sorry, if only I had tried to avoid even a little.”

If it was Raven, he would not have suffered such a wound and would certainly be able to stop Fergus' sword.

"No, it's only a graze."

Paul lent his hand to Fergus as he tried to help Fergus up.

Glancing at that, Lota spoke out.

"Both Raven and Nico had soon entered the dreams just now so what's up with you two being later than me?"

"We got a little lost. But it was thanks to Mr Nico and the bloodstone that we were able to come here."

"Raven, did you go to consult Nico? After Paul and I were taken away by the Blue Men..."

Raven nodded quietly.

"Yes. I couldn't think of any other way."

"Earl, it's thanks to me that you're saved you know."

Perhaps it was because Nico was relieved that there would be no further fighting, that he came out from the shadows of the rocks and puffed his chest out proudly.

"I thought of the fact that it must be this island, which had a history since olden times, that is connected to the dwelling of the Blue Men and the dream of the 'Master of the Islands.'"

"But you know, Nico, that knowledge of yours must have been overheard by

this boy from the McKeels.”

That was probably the case, because Fergus clicked his tongue.

“I’m sorry, Lord Edgar. I did sense the presence of someone eavesdropping.”

Raven hung his head low apologetically.

“No Raven, it’s fine things turned out this way.”

Edgar had given up on destroying the Master’s dream because Fergus came.

Furthermore, it was Lota who brought Paul and Fergus, who should have been stopped at the dream’s entrance.

Rather, Edgar thought, putting Nico and Raven aside, the fact that the 3 of them who had no connection to magic had entered, was the will of the Master.

In order to stop Edgar, the Master

may have invited Fergus in. And in doing so, led to the current conclusion.

“In any case, there’s already nothing more we can do by staying here. Let’s leave.”

As Edgar left the prase pond and exited the chalcedony cave which was covered with eggshell-like rocks, there were standing stones before him, unlike what he saw when he entered.

The moment they passed through the side of those standing stones, the scenery of an endless field transformed completely.

Just as they thought that it had turned to night suddenly, 5 people and a cat stood stock still on the narrow shores of the small island, as if they were thrown out into reality.

Even when they turned back, naturally that enormous egg which was packed with chalcedony was nowhere to be found.

The sea which extended before their eyes was lit by the moon.

(Sir, were you able to find your way to the spring?)

A bluish white object floated on the excessively quiet waves.

Perhaps the magic of the Blue Men would weaken in seas with calm winds, because they were small and merely floating about like jellyfish.

(It seems like the Master did not awaken. But you were able to enter the source of the dreams right?)

(Share some of the magic from the spring with us. We'll somehow make things work if we have magic.)

(We'll be released from the depths of the dark seas.)

The Blue Men demanded unanimously.

“The spring no longer exists. Everything has turned to stone.”

At once, they started to cause a commotion.

(Sir, didn't you know? The Master's spring is a spring of rocks. What gushes forth are special gemstones. The magic of the heavens and earth are blended with each other and crystallizes bit by bit. Finally, once in every millennium, a droplet will gush out to the bottom of the pond.)

A spring of, rocks?

"By pond, do you mean the prase bedrock? Don't tell me, that's the spring's water?"

(No sir, it gushes out from the depths of the rock; it is round like the moon, of a deep green like it is wet and has a powerful red hidden – a bloodstone.)

A bloodstone. It's true that is also chalcedony.

The source of the Master's

dream is a spring of chalcedony. And so, the droplet that gushes forth from the spring, is not water but a bloodstone.

Round and shining glossily like ...

Edgar felt a sense of *déjà vu* with regards to that gemstone.

I have seen it before. As he thought that, Edgar looked at Raven hurriedly. Raven who received Edgar's glance, then turned his eyes towards Nico. Nico, appearing to be taken aback, stared at the thing which was clutched tightly between his open paws.

(That's it. Give it to us!)

The Blue Men floated out of the seas unexpectedly. They went after Nico by jumping at him simultaneously.

"Waah, not this, I won't give it up!"

Nico panicked and tried to hide behind Raven's leg, but even Raven couldn't do anything against ghosts which were already dead.

When the Blue Men raged, the waves and the winds assaulted them together.

Everyone clung onto a boulder nearby.

In order to protect Raven, Edgar grabbed Nico with all his strength and held Nico up.

"I get it, I'll give it to you so disappear quickly!"

"Gyaah, Ea-Earl! Do you intend to throw even me?"

As he held Nico in his arms, Edgar secretly picked up a pebble and threw it towards the sea.

Appearing to believe that that was the bloodstone from the spring, the Blue Men went after the pebble all at once and disappeared into the sea.

Nico, who heaved a sigh of relief, was clinging on to Edgar's arm.

Even Raven, who appeared to have panicked over having his only friend thrown away into the sea, froze as he continued to hold on to Edgar's coat somewhat reservedly.

"Well, let's escape while we can now."

"My ship is this way."

Lota pointed the way and everyone ran off together.

Crossing the hill on the small island, they hurried to the shore on the opposite side. Soon, Lota's ship came into view.

However, by the time they boarded Lota's ship, Nico had vanished.

He was probably afraid of having his bloodstone taken away by Edgar.

Unexpectedly, that stone was also a medicine for Lydia.

Edgar vaguely felt that that was precisely why Nico vanished.

Nico must also have realized that Lydia would be able to become happy if Edgar himself did not exist.

In the quiet seas of a moonlit night, a sailing ship progressed while flying the family flag of the Archduke of Cremona.

The ship was on a course towards the Inner Hebrides where the Connaughts were based.

Edgar stood on the deck looking at the sea. Then, Raven approached him and spoke.

"Lord Edgar, please give me the order. I'll persuade Mr Nico."

Raven probably meant that he will persuade Nico to yield the bloodstone to them. If Nico agrees, Edgar would be able to bring Lydia back immediately.

“Raven, the truth is that you do not wish to do so isn’t it?”

Nico had vanished because he feared that would happen. Although Edgar did not know what the bloodstone meant to Nico, but be it because the bloodstone was something important to Nico or because it was for Lydia’s sake, Nico would only be troubled by Raven pleading with him.

“But, Lord Edgar.”

“It’s fine. It was my mistake to try and obtain the medicine.”

Although he wanted to think that it was for Lydia’s sake to bring her back, it was nothing more than for his own self-satisfaction.

Even for the matter concerning Prince, though he had told himself that if he was with Lydia he would be able to overcome it, he was probably averting his eyes from the possibility of dragging her down with him.

There’s no point if he was causing her to be prepared for the worst case scenario.

Edgar himself needed to have the resolve not to stray from the right path no matter what happens.

Even though what was more important was for him to have that resolution, rather than the temptation to recover Lydia immediately, he lost sight of it.

Even without such a fiancé, Lydia would probably be able to find a new

happiness on these islands which were also her mother's hometown.

If giving up on her was the definite form of love Edgar was able to give her, he thought that he would do so.

"The winds are great so it seems like we'll arrive on the island soon."

Lota who held the helm, was smoking a cigarette. Paul, who appeared to be exhausted, leaned against a barrel and dozed.

"Hey, let me down at a nearby port."

Fergus, who had cooped himself up in the cabin until now, came out onto the deck and spoke to Lota. With a swollen left eye, he looked terribly displeased.

"Sure, but are you fine already?"

"Yeah. ...In any case, I'm someone uninvited to you guys here. I feel ill at ease and I want to return to the McKeels' islands quickly."

Edgar heard it as Fergus wanting to return to Lydia's side quickly. So much so that if possible, he wanted to swell up Fergus' right eye as well.

Yet, Fergus approached Edgar without noticing the danger.

"Earl, I guess I'll still thank you for saving me."

"... What are you talking about?"

"I can't understand anything about you. Yet, you are trusted by a decent person like Paul. That's why, I probably ... No, it's nothing. In the end, things

ended without having me turned into a slave for the Blue Men.”

Fergus was indeed an earnest young man. Although Edgar was a young man himself, he knew perfectly well that he could not be so earnest like Fergus.

It was not hard to imagine that such a man would be the kind who Lydia would find it easy to trust from the bottom of her heart.

“That’s good to hear.”

Although Edgar deliberately answered indifferently, Fergus persistently questioned Edgar in a serious manner.

“So, what will you do?”

“About what?”

“About Lydia.”

When Edgar fell silent, Fergus leaned against the railings and looked up towards the moon.

“The same as before huh. If it’s going to take thrree years, I have no intention of keeping quiet and watching it go by in the meantime.”

“It’s not the same. I no longer... I’ll dissolve the engagement.”

Edgar probably wouldn’t be able to forget Lydia. But he was placing her happiness before everything else. Edgar had just arrived at this decision.

Fergus looked at Edgar, surprised. It was not only Fergus; Lota nearly dropped her cigarette as well.

“Edgar, are you serious?”

“Yeah.”

“Wait a moment, you went so far to court Lydia yet...”

Saying that, Lota tried to grab Edgar. But before she could do so, Fergus had already stretched his hand out and grabbed Edgar by his collar.

“That’s just being one-sided isn’t it!? There’s no way Lydia would agree to it. She wanted to save you so much that she went after you as a dream!”

While he held Raven back with a glance, Edgar pried away Fergus’ hands.

“Isn’t this good news to you? Also, Lydia will agree to it.”

When Lydia broached the topic of breaking up, she had thought that it was for Edgar’s sake.

Now he understood. Lydia had said that she was attracted to Fergus, but if so, there’s no way Lydia would change her resolution of being together with Edgar no matter where he went, even if it meant that she would fall with him.

It was precisely because Edgar clearly understood the seriousness of Lydia’s feelings towards him that he gave up on destroying the Master’s dream.

Lydia would surely understand Edgar’s feelings behind his decision to break up.

“If so, I’ll tell Lydia that you died. Since that means that it won’t matter to you what kind of means I use.”

Even though he had intended to tell Edgar that flatly by pointing his index finger at Edgar, Fergus just wasn’t able to pull it off with his eye swollen.

And thanks to that, Edgar was able to hold back his sarcasm of telling Fergus “Someone like you won’t be able to win Lydia’s heart.”

“Lota, if you are also going to Lydia’s, treat it as such.”

Lota looked mad as she raised her brows tightly, but she turned her back against Edgar without saying a word and returned to steer the ship.

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When Fergus finally returned and arrived at the McKeels’ main mansion, he answered Patrick’s questioning while becoming absent-minded halfway through. During the time while he rested as though he had collapsed, Patrick visited the mansion on the cape where Lydia was at.

Unlike Fergus who had no serious intention of telling Lydia such things as Edgar being dead, Patrick saw it as a quick and easy method and so went ahead to execute it promptly.

When Fergus found out about that, he ended up burying his head in his hands, even though he was supposed to be refreshed from having just woken up.

“Wh... why did you do that!?”

“The Earl said it was fine to do so right?”

“But, if she found out that it’s a lie, this will only have the opposite effect isn’t it!?”

“Then we’ll just have to make sure she doesn’t find out.”

Patrick said that simply.

Then, Patrick bent forward towards Fergus who was resting his chin in his hand with a sullen look. Just as how Patrick had always done to Fergus who was his junior since the past, Patrick spoke slowly in order to make Fergus come round to him.

“Fergus, do you understand? One day, we may have to fight Prince. If that’s the case, then the possibility of you killing the Earl will not be low.”

“...All the more so, Lydia will not open her heart to a man who killed her fiancé.”

“You will become the chief of the McKeels. If you intend to obtain Lydia, you have no choice but to have her accept even the fact that you and the Earl are against each other. Now, even if she hates you for the time being, she can’t leave the McKeels. You have plenty of time to make up to her and earn her forgiveness.”

What Patrick said was right. Even though Fergus always felt the urge to oppose Patrick, he wasn’t able to refute Patrick.

“Or, is she not a woman who is worth the effort for you to go so far?”

“Don’t talk nonsense. ...While it’s true that in the beginning I looked at her out of curiosity, she really is a fine girl.”

Satisfied, Patrick nodded. In the end, Fergus was always persuaded to act as Patrick wanted.

“In order to make her a member of the McKeels, you will have to become an existence greater than the Earl. Otherwise, even if the Earl becomes Prince, when he appears before her, she’ll probably run after him.”

It’s exactly as Patrick said.

But when it comes to Lydia, Fergus couldn’t think that it was right to do as Patrick said.

It may be because somewhere, Fergus felt that love is something that betrays one’s expectations.

To begin with, it’s like the fact that Aurora had eloped with Professor Carlton. The fact that Lydia who is supposed to be Fergus’ betrothed is engaged to the Earl of Ashenbert. The fact that that Earl is the successor to the “Prince of Calamity” and Lydia is the woman capable of awakening the Prophet, who is the only existence which can defeat Prince.

Isn’t everything betraying even what the Prophet had prophesized?

And also the fact that Fergus had seriously fallen for Lydia so much that he was unable to be like Patrick and make calculated moves.

“Excuse me.”

At that moment, a servant entered Fergus’ room. It was a man who was working at the mansion on the cape where Lydia was.

When he heard the man’s report, Fergus couldn’t help but jump up.

“Lydia’s gone?”

“Aah, just as I thought, it seems that things aren’t going to be that simple.”

Patrick said that without changing his expression.

“Isn’t it because you said unnecessary things? Don’t tell me, that she is thinking of ...”

There was a possibility of her thinking of going after the Earl. Fergus panicked and took his cloak.

“She’s the daughter of Aurora so she’s not that weak a woman. Most likely, she had gone to the Connaughts’ lands together with Kelly.

“That, so Patrick, you knew? About Kelly’s origin...”

“I had her investigated.”

While he thought that Patrick was a cautious man, Fergus considered the reasons behind why Lydia had left.

If she’s headed towards the Connaughts, it’s probably to verify the Earl’s

death.

But if Lydia were to leave that cape she would be tormented by the pain brought about by the wound caused by the Fir Chlis.

As Fergus thought that in any case he couldn't stay still, he ran out of the mansion.

As he hurried the horse, he remembered about what he did not tell Patrick.

About what Lota had said when he disembarked from the ship.

"You, are you seriously in love with Lydia?"

It was a tone that contained pity somewhere.

"Can't I?"

He thought that Lota was also an honest person. As far as Fergus was concerned, he felt that she was the type who he felt that he could trust. And she also sides with Edgar who Fergus can't understand.

"I'll bring Edgar to Lydia. The two of them just can't part like this. Because I think that they should meet and talk to each other about the future."

It was only that Fergus had vaguely felt it. That Edgar was an unbelievable guy. Going beyond what's good and evil, he had gone through many things that would make people accept him no matter what he did.

If what Paul said about him being a victim of Prince was true, then the fact that he had become the "Prince of Calamity" was also one which the people close to him can accept.

Naturally, Lydia was also likely to be the same.

If that's the case, then this was most likely something unexpected to Prince's organization thus far.

Different from the "Prince of Calamity" which was born out of evil magic a hundred years ago, Edgar was probably something new.

"Lydia's injury is something that worsens if she gets close to the magic that the Earl holds. She can't even meet him until she has fully healed."

When Fergus said that, Lota tilted her head to the side as if she did not quite understand, but she probably thought that the details did not matter. She went on quickly to put forth her main point.

"That black-haired guy... Patrick was it? Bring Lydia out without that guy knowing. If you light up 3 fires as a signal to me, I'll head to the coast."

"Do you think I'll do such a thing?"

And then Lota peered into Fergus' eyes and grinned.

"I didn't say you have to."

Don't joke with me.

As he hurried his horse, Fergus muttered.

The further the carriage was away from the cape, the more Lydia bore with the pain that she felt from her back wound, as if it was ailing.

Her body felt languid and she also felt feverish.

"Miss, are you alright?"

Kelly peered into Lydia's eyes worryingly.

"Yes, it's nothing serious."

It's still not so bad that I can't bear with it.

When I think about whether it's true that Edgar had died, that's more painful than any physical pain.

And then Lydia thought calmly.

If anything had happened to Edgar, Raven should be hiding at the Connaughts. In order to oppose the McKeels in this Hebridean Archipelago, Edgar had brought the Connaughts, who were another powerful clan, over to his side. The Connaught clan chief was giving Edgar his full support, and that was also why Kelly worked for Lydia.

If she went to the Connaughts' lands, she should be able to find out accurately what happened to Edgar. Depending on the situation, Lydia intended to verify with her own eyes even if it were his remains.

"We'll be arriving soon, once we cross that hill."

Kelly tried to cheer Lydia up, but that hill was still far away and looked to be blurred in greyness.

Each time the carriage swayed, it affected her unhealed wound.

It was a carriage they ordered under the pretext that Kelly had to return to her parent's home due to an emergency. On the carriage which was topless and simple, Lydia, who had used most of the kilt as a shawl to cover herself, appeared to be a maid like Kelly to the driver.

Although it was rather constrained with 2 people riding in it, they had no choice as they had secretly sneaked out.

“Miss, please lean against me. You’ll definitely be more comfortable that way.”

“Thank you, Kelly.”

As she got used to her wound’s pain, she was assaulted by drowsiness. Her body which was resisting against the Fir Chlis’ poison, was trying to conserve as much strength as it could.

If she leaned against Kelly, the sway of the rigid carriage was somewhat cushioned. Lydia fell into a light sleep.

Before she knew it, she had lost sense of time.

Although she remembered being conscious of the surroundings turning rather dark, when she woke up after that, she was on top of a simple bed.

Kelly who was beside her, told her that they were at the Connaughts’ mansion.

*

Seated alone in the fields, Nico rolled the bloodstone about his paws and looked at it.

Strong winds blew and rubbed Nico’s long fur the wrong way. As it mowed

down the short grasses one after another, the winds ran up the hill.

The bloodstone emitted a soft and comfortable light while being enshrined on the paws of Nico, who did not stir an inch in the winds.

As if it was saying that it liked being where it was.

“I wonder what I should do. ... Tell me, Aurora.”

This was the droplet from the Master’s spring. If he let Lydia consume it, then the wounds she sustained from the Fir Chlis’ blade should heal at once.

The bloodstone that’s said to be the crystallization of aurora. The lights from the heavens which fell onto the islands, were enveloped by the chalcedony deep beneath the earth, and became a single droplet that gushed forth from the spring in the Master’s dream.

On these islands, even now there was still fraternization between the magic of the heavens and earth. The beings and power of the underworld, were living in a pronounced manner. That’s why the existence known as the “Prince of Calamity” was even born and that the Prophet was also supposed to be somewhere.

And it’s said that this bloodstone was the clue to knowing the Prophet.

If the Prophet were to get his hands on this, its colour will change. That individual will then save the islands using the magic that is hidden in here.

I wonder if it will be alright to let Lydia consume such a thing. That was what Nico was first troubled over.

If this bloodstone is taken in by Lydia's body, doesn't that mean that the Prophet will come to need Lydia herself?

Lydia will then have no way to escape and be made to support the Prophet, who is supposed to defeat Prince. If she herself ends up being the one to drive Edgar to a corner, she would definitely be unable to bear with it.

If Lydia were to obtain the medicine and go on to marry Edgar, they may be forced to be on opposing sides to each other even though they are husband and wife.

If that's the case, they can just take it that there was no medicine and have Lydia take time to cure her wounds. Nico can make sure that this bloodstone doesn't fall into anyone's hands.

But without the medicine, the two of them will probably end up breaking up. Lydia had intended to do so, while Edgar had come to realise that his strong feelings may cause Lydia to become unfortunate.

That's why he gave up obtaining the medicine and even felt that it was fine for him to be killed.

Isn't it fine if they broke up? That way would be better for Lydia's sake.

Nico told himself that and grasped the bloodstone.

It'll be alright if I hide this.

Getting up, Nico started to walk in order to return to the mansion on the cape where Lydia was. But immediately, he stood still.

Is that so? Will Lydia truly be happy if she parted with the Earl?

Aurora became happy because she eloped with the Professor. If she had given up, she probably wouldn't have been that radiant.

Even when she was nearing her death, she was smiling. She was satisfied being with her husband and daughter.

"Urgh, I can't figure this out, Aurora..."

Nico ruffled the fur on his head.

"Oi, Puny Cat! What are you doing not returning quickly!?"

"I'm not a cat!"

As Nico retorted out of reflex to the sudden voice, he turned back.

A black horse closed in on him from above. Nico panicked and bent down towards the ground.

Although he trembled as he thought that he wouldn't last a second if he were kicked, Kelpie jumped over Nico and stopped.

"Wh-... What are you doing? That's dangerous isn't it!?"

"Lydia's gone, what are you going to do for me?!"

Gone? Kelpie pressed his snout close to Nico, who was unable to grasp the situation.

"You say she's gone but Lydia can't be away from that cape!"

“Even so it seems like she left. After that guy Patrick visited Lydia’s room. Something must have happened. Come, let’s go!”

All of a sudden, Kelpie opened his mouth wide enough to bite Nico.

I’m going to be eaten...! Soon after he closed his eyes, Nico’s necktie was hung over Kelpie’s teeth.

And like that, Kelpie shook his head in a wide arc and threw Nico up.

“Uwaaa!”

Nico who flew into the air, barely caught on to Kelpie’s mane; but he then desperately clung on to the mane in order not to be dropped by a Kelpie who had already started to ran off like the wind.

“Where are you going!?”

“Of course, I’m going to bring Lydia back. If she leaves the cape her condition will deteriorate right? If I don’t find her quickly, it might become matter of life and death!”

“But, do you know where she is?”

“When Lydia does something outrageous, the Earl’s definitely involved!”

Chapter 8: The promised dawn

After resting for around two hours at Connaught clan's village, Lydia quickly decided to head towards where the clan chief is in the Inner Hebrides.

Of course, just reaching Connaughts' village did not mean that Lydia will be able to find out about Edgar immediately.

The village headman had sent out a messenger but it was also frustrating to wait for news to come.

In the event that it was the news of death that came, either way Lydia would still have to make her way to the clan chief's mansion.

As she considered that, Lydia got dressed and quickly made arrangements for a ship to be ready.

Since she was not leaving the Hebrides archipelago, her physical condition should not deteriorate too rapidly. As long as she was not basked in the curative magic at McKeel's cape, the pain was the same wherever she was. If that was the case, then it would be faster for her to head out instead of waiting for news to come here.

"Miss Carlton, I am afraid there is only a donkey cart that can bring us to the coast."

"That is more than enough, Kelly."

Getting up from her seat, Lydia walked out of the building on her own.

Although it was supposed to be in the middle of the night, the surroundings were becoming faintly visible.

I feel fine. With this, I should be able to cross the straits.

Lydia could see the donkey cart on the other side of the hedge.

There, was a man who was in an argument with the villagers.

Lydia could tell from the colour of the cloak that the man was not from the Connaughts. Rather, it was the coloured pattern of the McKeels which she was used to seeing.

The red-haired young man noticed Lydia and immediately tried to run over towards Lydia. Kelly rushed to stand in front of Lydia.

“Lydia, as I thought, you are here.”

“Fergus...”

“I need to talk to you.”

He grabbed Lydia’s hand, but she quickly shook it off.

“Ah...., sorry....”

Fergus sighed as he saw Lydia with her eyes cast downwards.

“You can’t forgive me, huh.”

“You have your own position you need to consider. But for me, because I am Edgar’s fiancé.”

As she said that, Lydia put strength into her whole being in order to steel herself.

Fergus knows the truth. Yet he does not deny having struck Edgar.

Then this can only mean that Edgar is

What should I do? I came to find out for myself but I don't think that I will be able to come to terms with this.

When she clenched her trembling fingers, Fergus furrowed his brows deeply and looked down towards Lydia.

“That guy, he said that he is dissolving the engagement.”

And then, for some reason, Fergus said that in an exhausted manner.

Confused, Lydia lifted her face slightly.

“He said that you would agree to it. Even though I told him that I will treat it as though he died, he said that's fine.”

“Treat it as though he died ...?”

“Yeah, sorry. That Patrick, he said that it'd be for the best if that were the case and went on ahead to tell you.”

Lydia was so surprised that she forgot to breathe.

“.... Is that true?”

As she spoke, she finally realized her breathlessness and hurriedly took in air.

Lydia stared hardly at Fergus as she tried to ascertain his true motive.

“I’m sorry I tried to cheat you. The Earl’s alive and well. At that time, that guy gave up destroying the spring’s rock of his own volition. I ended up like this because I was attacked by that valet.”

When she took a closer look, she saw that there was swelling above Fergus’ eye.

It’s true.

Edgar is alive.

Lydia lost her strength and nearly sat down onto the ground. Fergus quickly stretched out his arm to support her.

Even though she thought that it was improper to be caught in a man’s arms, she didn’t have strength in her legs to stand.

Edgar is alive. Her mind was full of this thought.
She started to tear.

“Great.... Edgar is alive. I would not know what to do otherwise...”

As she became overwhelmed, Lydia cried in Fergus’ arms, not realizing how troubled he was with that.

“I was so afraid...”

Lydia did not want to think that it was Edgar’s fate to lose his life that way. Edgar was someone who had been through painful experiences and survived. He should be living in happiness yet he had shouldered the burden of “Prince’s memories” for Lydia’s sake.

Although she wanted to stay by his side and be his source of tranquility, if that was not possible she could only pray for him. Yet just as she decided upon this, she thought that he had died and she was not even given the chance to pray for his happiness. Just the thought of this was painful for Lydia.

“I’m sorry.”

Fergus caressed Lydia’s head as he said that.

Lydia was only slightly conscious of that because Fergus was after all, a relative on her mother’s side. She was still unable to stand on her own.

Fergus led Lydia, who was still crying, towards the bench under the overhang of the roof and sat her down.

Kelly went into the house to fetch for some water.

As she calmed down gradually, Lydia started to become conscious of what Edgar said about dissolving their engagement bit by bit.

Edgar had probably decided not to destroy the Master’s Dream because he did not want to come into contact with Prince’s memories any further.

Lydia did not mind falling into darkness together with Edgar. But Lydia’s dearest wish was for Edgar to be happy. So long as this wish can be granted, she was fine if she cannot be together with Edgar.

If Edgar lives on as the Blue Knight Earl and not Prince, Lydia will be fine with it.

“I will return. I need to focus on my treatment.”

Lydia muttered that as she wiped away her tears.

Fergus stared at Lydia as he was surprised at how quickly Lydia completely changed her feelings.

“In order for you to return to his side quickly?”

That promise no longer exists.

“Edgar said that the engagement is dissolved isn’t it? I will do as he says.”

Lydia was surprised at herself for not doubting Edgar’s feelings a single bit. She thought that it was a decision made precisely because of his love for her.

“Lydia, if that’s the case, can’t I become your source of strength? I said it before, I quite, no, I am serious about you.”

To have someone say something like that with seriousness in his eyes, was something which until now was unthinkable for Lydia. So Lydia was honestly glad.

“... Thank you, Fergus.”

But, it was because Edgar fell in love with her that Lydia was able to have a little self-confidence.

To Lydia, the one who will be the dearest person in her heart will always be Edgar.

“I am sorry for clinging onto you For behaving in an improper manner.”

“I don’t mind.”

Fergus was one of the few rare human men who Lydia is able to feel at ease with. If she never knew Edgar, Fergus might become someone she likes the most.

“I will return to my own home once my wound has healed. Nico came back to me and there is also Kelpie; I would think that living together quietly with fairies is more suitable for me than to become the wife of Clan McKeel’s chief.”

“Do you not intend to marry anyone?”

“I won’t. Because even after now I will always remain as Edgar’s fiancé.”

Fergus sighed as he looked up upon the faintly dark skies with a bitter smile while combing up his hair.

Just as she thought that Fergus was silent in deep thoughts, he suddenly grabbed Lydia’s arm and stood up.

“Let’s go.”

“Erm, where to?”

Fergus dragged Lydia along forcibly and seated her on top of a horse.

“Miss Carlton! Hey, where do you think you are bringing Miss Carlton to!?”

Kelly noticed what happened as she came out of the house and ran towards them.

“Don’t worry. I won’t do anything.”

Fergus rode away on the horse, ignoring Kelly’s calls to stop.

As the nights are short on the northern islands, even without the moon one can see the surroundings vaguely. In the midst of such a night, walking from the mansion of Clan Connaught chief towards the port, one can easily see the eye-catching outline of a battleship so incompatible with the small port anchored there.

It's Lota's ship.

On the ship stuffed with large cannons sticking out, the sailors are busy working as they are pressed to prepare for departure.

Lota had already made up her mind to visit the McKeels in the Outer Hebrides. Apparently, Lota had decided to stay for some time in order to keep Lydia company.

Lydia will probably be able to feel at ease if she had a close friend by her side.

As he thought of that, Edgar felt a little comforted even though he will never be able to meet Lydia again.

"My Lord, are you on a stroll?"

Paul appeared from the other end of the path.

"Perhaps because I had been inside a dream for some time, I don't feel like sleeping."

Paul, who asked that, will be returning to London together with Edgar.

Even though he was shouldering Prince's memories, Paul had still shown him the same friendship. Although Edgar was not able to attain the droplet from the Master's Spring, this made Edgar feel that it was for the best.

"I came to see how Lota's preparation for departure is progressing. Are you here for the same reason as well?"

"Yes, she, really likes ships. She is knowledgeable and is leading the sailors perfectly."

Paul, who has no reason to know that Lota used to be a pirate, was sincerely filled with admiration.

Paul's character of not doubting others a single bit is truly pleasant.

Edgar swore in his heart not to be swayed by Princes' memories inside him, so as to properly reciprocate Paul's trust and Lydia's feelings.

"That's right. Have you seen Raven?"

"Ah.... Erm... If I am not wrong, he was over there ..."

As Paul answered, he appeared flustered and his eyes moved around shiftily.

Wondering what that was about and moving towards the path Paul pointed at, a few brawny men came running towards Edgar and suddenly, he was being surrounded.

Although he became guarded, when Edgar realized Lota was amongst the men, he ended up letting down his guard.

“Lota, and ... aren't you all Lota's sailors?”

“Alright, grab him!”

Lota ordered. In an instant, all of them went for Edgar.

“Wh- what is this about, Lota!?”

Confused as to what was going on, Edgar had his arms bound behind him.

And on top of that, he was blindfolded and forcibly boarded onto a ship.

Edgar was brought into a room on the ship and tied to a chair.

Thinking that this must be some kind of a joke, Edgar hesitated to put up a fight seriously, but it seems that the other party is serious about robbing him of his freedom.

Although he knew that the room was locked, by the time Edgar regained his freedom by cutting against the rope using the blade he hid within his cuffs, the ship had already set sail.

He could see the vague outline of the islands of the Inner Hebrides outside the window.

While he looked on, Edgar vaguely realized what Lota was up to.

I have to make the ship turn back immediately.

Although Edgar had that thought, he was unable to act upon it, as he stood still by the window side until he could no longer see the outlines of the islands through the window.

I am being confined.

With that as an excuse, somewhere in his heart, Edgar thought that he may be able to meet Lydia one more time.

No, I can't. If I meet her, I do not know what I might do.

Finally hardening his resolve, Edgar sat back onto the chair. Pretending that he was still tied up, he raised his voice.

“Oi, Lota! What is the meaning of this?! If you don't explain to me right now, I will turn your precious ship into a pile of firewood!”

Soon, the door opened and Lota entered the room.

“Anything but that. I know that someone like you will really do that.”

“If so, release me.”

“Not yet. You will have to stay that way until we arrive at where Lydia is.”

Standing in front of Edgar, Lota crossed her arms.

Edgar lowered his eyes as he thought, as I expected.

“... I will not meet Lydia. It will only worsen her injuries and, this is something both of us have already agreed to.”

Hearing that, Lota raised her eyebrows unhappily.

“Agreed? Obviously not! An engagement may be a frivolous word to you, but to Lydia, it is a resolve she makes only once in her life. As if it can be dissolved so easily!”

“It is not frivolous. To begin with, Lydia was the one who said she wanted to break up. I also came to realize that it was for the best.”

“You won’t know for sure unless both of you meet isn’t it? Not in the dreams but look at Lydia in reality. Hear her voice and feel her presence right beside you. Then think clearly about whether Lydia has really accepted it and what it is that you want to do!”

Lota pointed her index finger arrogantly at Edgar. Irritated, Edgar grabbed Lota’s finger and stood up from the chair suddenly.

Edgar then said to Lota, who was caught by surprise, right by her ear.

“I do not take instructions from you.”

As Edgar then deliberately blew air into her ears, Lota let out a howl and backed away anxiously.

“Tsk, as expected, I cannot let my guard down around you.”

“Let’s have you return this ship to the port.”

But Lota also wasn’t one who would do as others say easily.

“I don’t want to. I’ll have you know that we have a hostage here as well.”

When Lota snapped her fingers, Paul opened the door timidly.

“Paul, are you the hostage?”

“No, erm”

“My apologies, Lord Edgar.”

Raven, with both his hands bound, appeared as he was brought over by Paul.

That kind of rope won't even last three seconds with Raven. To begin with, even if the whole lot of Lota's sailors went after Raven at once, there is no way they would be able to restrain Raven.

Exhausted, Edgar looked at Raven.

“You also agree with Lota...?”

“No, I ... I will follow Lord Edgar.”

If he ordered, Raven would open up one or two holes in this ship, or be able to make this ship return to port. But it was probably because he did not want to stop Lota's plan of forcibly bringing Edgar out that he chose to be restrained.

“So this was something all of you planned together.”

Raven, Paul and Lota, are all trying to make Edgar meet Lydia. They think that Edgar and Lydia should meet properly and discuss about the future.

Sitting back onto the chair, Edgar sighed. Tired, he looked at his friends.

“In any case, release Raven's rope won't you? With that kind of rope, it makes no difference whether it's there or not isn't it?”

At the same time as Paul nodded, Raven withdrew his hands from the rope.

“Captain, could you please come over?”

At that time, one of the sailors came over and called Lota.

“What’s the matter?”

“We have a signal from the island of our destination, but the location is different.”

“A signal?”

When Edgar asked, Lota motioned for him to follow her.

Everyone headed towards the deck.

Peering through the binoculars, Lota looked towards the west where it was still too dark to see clearly.

“I see. Let’s confirm after we get a little closer.”

Taking a look for himself using the binoculars Lota handed him, Edgar could see the dim outline of an island under the dark skies. The flickering lights at one corner of the island was probably that of a bonfire. He could see three lights shining like red dots.

“What signal is it for?”

“Fergus should have brought Lydia to a coast that’s away from people’s eyes. But that spot is quite further north away from the cape that Lydia is supposed to be.”

“That area is not land that belongs to the McKeels. There should be a village

of the Connaughts.”

Raven said that as he checked against the map and the direction.

What does that mean? Edgar fell into his thoughts. *If Lydia is there, that would mean that she left the cape while bearing with the pain of her injury?*

If she was on land belonging to the Connaughts, wasn't it to meet him?

It can't be, that because she had heard from Fergus that he died....?

“Verify that quickly. If Lydia is away from the cape, her condition will deteriorate.”

Uneasy, Edgar anxiously leaned out against the side of the ship.

After he stopped the horse at the coast and lowered Lydia onto the ground, Fergus started work silently on the faintly dark beach.

Using the peat and straw he obtained from the houses they came across on their way here, Fergus built three small mounds on the beach.

Although her wound's pain had faded slightly, her temperature seems to have risen, so Lydia covered herself with the quilt tightly as she felt cold.

“Are you feeling cold? I'll light up the fire.”

Fergus said that and lit the peat.

As he sat Lydia down near the fire, he focused his eyes and looked towards the sea.

“Hey, what is this?”

“.... You will find out soon.”

Fergus, who replied brusquely, did not appear to want to explain further.

Lydia did not understand what was happening. But since Fergus was looking towards the sea so intently, she thought vaguely that it could be a signal for a ship.

The eastern skies started to bring about the sense of dawn.

Is a ship ... coming?

Lydia, who was warmed by the bonfire, felt sleepy.

She thought as she fell into a doze.

That's right, I wonder if Lota is coming.

Or, could it be, Edgar...?

No, he won't come.

He should understand that it would be better that way.

Because, if we meet ...

I feel like I would say something willful, even though we finally managed to make our resolve.

“Lydia, they're here.”

Taken aback by Fergus' voice, Lydia opened her eyes.

Under the skies which brightened up further, Lydia saw a boat which landed on the beach. Off the shore, there was a large ship anchored.

There were two silhouettes on the boat. One of them jumped off onto the shoal, walked towards the beach and stopped.

“Edgar ...”

Lydia, who stood up, unconsciously felt the urge to run over towards him.

“Lydia, I came to bid farewell to you.”

Lydia held herself back as she heard those words.

On the other hand, Edgar’s voice stirred up feelings within Lydia’s chest uncontrollably.

It’s not a dream, he is really there.

His voice had reached Lydia’s ears in reality, his blonde hair swaying in the wind and his slender silhouette were all not illusions; his ash mauve eyes were truly looking at Lydia.

Lydia herself did not know whether she felt breathless because of the blade of the Fir Chlis or because Edgar was right there in front of her eyes.

“... You will be returning right? To London.”

With great difficulty, Lydia managed to say that.

“Thank you, because of your love, I was able to not stray from the path.”

“I have always given you trouble. Yet, I did not know anything.”

Edgar shook his head as he smiled painfully.

“Let me just say one last thing. I will definitely only love you alone for the rest of my life.”

“No... you can't do that! You are a noble.”

Because Edgar's happiness should lie with the future of the Earl family, Lydia wanted Edgar to protect the family properly.

“You idiot, did you come just to say that?”

All of a sudden, Fergus raised his voice angrily.

“Listen up Earl, when Lydia heard that you died, she left the cape in order to verify for herself. Because she is your fiancé, she intended to do so as your only next of kin. Even when you said you will dissolve the engagement, she said that she will stay as your fiancé for the rest of her life ...”

“Fergus, it's fine. Edgar understands my feelings.”

“Lydia, is it alright for me to get closer? I want to take a look at your face clearly.”

After she nodded, Edgar started to walk towards her slowly. Lydia also started to move her legs as she walked closer towards Edgar.

But as both of them do so and move closer towards each other, halfway through, they were unable to stop.

At some point in time, Lydia started to break into a half run and it was probably the same for Edgar as well.

By the time she realized it, she had leaped into his arms.

When she was embraced tightly, Lydia also returned the embrace. But he soon loosened his arms, as if he just came to his senses.

“I’m sorry, that aggravated your wound didn’t it?”

“No, I’m fine.”

The moment she was touched by Edgar, her wound started to hurt. Even so if they were to let go, they would not be able to touch each other ever again. That was much more painful.

As Lydia continued to cling onto Edgar, this time round, Edgar embraced her gently.

The embrace in the dream was incomparable to their embrace now. His warmth and his lean muscles that she felt through the clothes, the strength in his arms which she felt directly, Lydia accepted the joy of their reunion with every fibre of her being.

He rested his cheeks against her hair. He murmured her name as if there was something more he wanted to say, but simply kept silent beyond that.

Lydia desperately endured the urge to say wilful things like “please wait for me until my wounds heal”.

If she were to do that, then it would be the same as what happened before. Edgar may end up coming into contact with Prince’s memories again for Lydia’s sake. As long as Lydia is bonded to the Prophet, Edgar would have to face the side of him in which Prince’s memories resides.

“... Thank you, Edgar.”

Finally, Lydia let go of her arms and wiped the tears off her cheeks.

The pain had worsened to the extent that it was even difficult to breathe. Lydia thought that she should bid her farewells while she can appear composed. If she were to collapse here, Edgar was sure to be worried.

“Farewell...”

Although Edgar looked as though he kept silent because he did not want to say those words, with great difficulty Lydia managed to turn her back against him.

“Earl--!”

Then, she heard Nico’s voice.

There was a black horse running along the coast. A grey-coloured cat was being flung around as it was hung from the mane.

Nico and Kelpie?

“Eei, I can’t figure it out no matter how much I think about it! That’s why I’m going to trust you!”

Nico looked like he threw something. Edgar probably caught it.

Because she would not be able to leave if she were to turn back, Lydia walked on without verifying what it was.

“Wait, Lydia!”

All of a sudden, as if he could no longer bear with it, Edgar said that.

Lydia's arm was grabbed. Before she could turn around, she was pulled towards him in a jerk.

Surprised, she looked up, and she was suddenly kissed.

He was unusually pushy, trying to force his way through her lips. As she panicked, Lydia felt something small and hard in her mouth, but because Edgar would not let her go, there was nothing she could do except to swallow it.

"... Ed-..., what did you ..."

When she could finally speak, she was gasping for air.

It was a kiss with someone she has to part with. Yet it was a kiss which confused Lydia, flushed her cheeks and made her go weak even more so than the first kiss.

On the other hand, she also felt that the pain from the wound receded entirely at once.

Her fever and the feeling like her whole body was as heavy as lead were also gone.

Even though Edgar's hands touched the wound by covering it, she did not feel anything.

What, did I consume?

"Aaah... If we met, I would definitely not be able to let go of you."

Saying that, Edgar gently caressed Lydia's hair.

He furrowed his brows painfully.

"I'm sorry Lydia, but I really can't give up on you. Please forgive my willfulness."

She suddenly felt her body float up, because Edgar had suddenly held her up in his arms. With that, he walked towards the boat.

"Eh... Edgar?"

"Fergus, you have my thanks!"

When Edgar said that without even turning back,

"I'm not doing this for you!"

Fergus said this regretfully, but with a smile on his face.

"Hey, Edgar! Put me down, I am ..."

As if he will not lend an ear to Lydia, Edgar continued walking along the shoals while holding Lydia in his arms.

"If we stay together, someday you may need to make painful decisions again..."

Even though she pounded his back, he would not put her down.

"Miss Carlton!"

As she was being boarded onto the boat, she heard Kelly's voice.

Kelly, who ran over because she was worried, probably realized that it was Edgar beside her. She then sent Lydia off by waving her hands.

“... All the best, Miss Carlton! May you find happiness with the Earl ...!”

“N-no, Kelly, stop Edgar!”

But Kelly only continued to wave her hands with a smile at where she was.

As Raven rowed the boat towards the open sea where the ship was, the figures of Kelly and Fergus became further and smaller, and eventually, their voices can no longer be heard.

With the white sails spread open, the ship progressed by cutting through the waves. Nico sat on the bar of the mast and looked towards the islands that were getting further away.

The islands which he had left in the past together with Aurora and Professor Carlton, this time round, he was leaving together with Lydia and the Earl.

Because he wanted to spend as much time as he can with Lydia and Raven, he thought that he was fine with leaving the islands, he intended to go on a journey to a place other than the islands.

The islands were gently sending Nico off. He narrowed his eyes as he felt that.

“So you are leaving, Aurora’s partner.”

A young man floated in front of him. He is the one who is part of the Master’s Dream.

“I am Lydia’s partner now.”

“That’s nice, being free.”

“Free huh I guess so. But I wonder if this is alright. Neither Lydia nor the Earl knows what that is.”

“Since Aurora had entrusted you with that, you should do as you wish.”

Aurora wished for Lydia’s happiness. Because she knew that someday when Lydia gets married she would not be by Lydia’s side, Aurora prayed for Lydia to be with someone she truly loves.

If so, Aurora should be happy.

“I wonder where the Prophet is.”

“Beats me. But so long as the Prophet does not encounter the bloodstone, he may live his life without realizing his own destiny.”

“Someone blood-related huh... If we leave the McKeels’ lands, chances of encountering him would become lower.”

“Or, perhaps the destinies have already changed. That Earl, he did not wake the Master.”

“Is that how it is?”

“Yeah, the future is something like that. Even if you came to know about something, the future will just keep changing.”

The future is probably moving further away from the future which the Prophet of the past saw...

Leaving that voice, the young man's figure disappeared.

He probably returned to the Master's Dream.

As sunrise approaches, the colour of the sea changes. Far off in the distance, the island that looks like a speck, is the island that is the "Master of the Islands."

The sailors gathered at the ship's bow carrying barrels. They then poured the beer made from the islands into the sea.

The beer was the offering to the Master, as was practiced in many places in the islands in the past.

Hearing the story about the "Master of the Islands" from Edgar, the Connaughts promised to present offerings like how it was done in the past. It appears that they had also called on the other clans to do the same.

If the cracks in the Master's Dream get restored, the power of the Unseelie Courts overflowing into the human world would weaken.

Although nothing will probably change in the short term, someday, things should improve for the better.

In the hundred over years when the Master's Dream became unstable, the Prince of Calamity appeared. If the maledictory powers surrounding Prince were to weaken even a little, Edgar may be able to stay as he is while keeping those memories sealed.

Nico moved his line of sight and without him noticing, Kelpie, in the form of a grown man, was sitting beside him on the same bar of the mast.

“Hey, is a human capable of waking up the “Master of the Islands” to begin with?”

Kelpie muttered in a way that did not seem like he was asking Nico. It sounded more like he was asking himself.

“Even if one had the treasured sword of the Blue Knight Earl, it is difficult to think that magic of the level that humans can wield is able to break that much of crystallized dreams isn’t it?”

“... Let me see. If the Earl did not desist from his plan to break the crystal, he might have lost his life.”

Even if that were not the case, it was surprising enough that the Earl, who tried to get close to the Master, was able to break through the Dream’s entrance unscathed.

That’s why Ermine asked Kelpie to stop the Earl. On the other hand, she gave the hint that led to the Earl getting closer to the “Master of the Islands.”

I wonder what that woman wanted to do. Kelpie was bothered by that.

To Ulysses, the Earl was “Prince”. The Earl was an essential existence in order for them to fulfil their objectives, so it was difficult to think that they would risk placing the Earl in a danger where he could die.

If so, wouldn't that mean that the one who is moving Ermine and leading the Earl, isn't Ulysses?

Kelpie thought that she, and that someone, could ultimately be testing the Earl.

Testing the Earl's true nature.

Testing whether there was a chance that he would be consumed by Prince's memories.

In the event that the Earl gets stirred up by the Unseelie Courts' magic and loses control of himself, then they would just drive him to his death together with Prince's memories. This was the only way Kelpie could think about it.

Kelpie wondered if Ermine, who admired and tried to protect the Earl, would be complicit in such a dangerous bet.

She may have made use of Kelpie in order to move Lydia into action. If it were Lydia, she would be able to keep the Earl's heart as the Blue Knight Earl.

"What exactly is going on, that woman..."

"That woman?"

Nico looked at Kelpie questioningly.

"Nothing."

Kelpie replied as he intended to keep matters concerning Ermine to himself.

This was a time when Lydia was going to achieve happiness. He should keep any uneasy elements to himself.

Looking downwards, he saw Lydia's figure. The Earl was pulling her hand, and it looked as though he had brought her out from the ship's room to the deck.

"Ahh, in any case what a pity. If that guy died, I would be able to live with Lydia like we did in the past."

Kelpie muttered that with a bitter smile.

"Edgar..., please don't hold on to my hand that strongly."

As she walked as though she was being dragged along, Lydia voiced out perplexedly.

"But if I loosen my grip, you are going to escape into the room and lock the door right?"

Edgar really seemed to think that Lydia will run away the moment he lets go.

"I wasn't able to unlock the door just now because Lota was in the midst of checking the wound on my back for me."

Although it was because she couldn't open the door without being properly dressed, as a result of Lota messing around with Edgar by telling him "She said that she doesn't want to see you now", Edgar waited by the door while troubling over this.

Once she was properly dressed, the moment Lota opened the door to leave, Edgar forcibly entered and brought Lydia out of the room after telling her "I

have something to say.”

With that, the both of them had just come out onto the deck.

“How’s your wound?”

“Yes... the pain has completely disappeared and Lota told me that no scar was left.”

It could be that Edgar was finally relieved, as he relaxed his grip, looked at Lydia and smiled softly.

“Is that so. ... That’s good to hear. This means that the magic from the Fir Chlis has completely disappeared right?”

Lydia nodded.

“I didn’t expect that the bloodstone that Nico had was the droplet from the Master’s Spring.”

I wonder how Mother obtained that.

Since she was working as a fairy doctor in the Hebrides archipelago, it may not be that strange if she happened to have it.

“Then, it doesn’t mean that you want to avoid me?”

Having come towards the railings and stopping there, Edgar turned his entire body towards Lydia and asked her while peering into her eyes.

It’s not that she wanted to avoid him. But Lydia was still feeling a little

confused.

Since they had decided to part, she wondered if it was alright for them to simply go with the flow like this.

The eastern skies were gradually being dyed a pale orange. One can feel the presence of the sun right beneath the horizon.

“Nico, he believed that I would not become Prince and that I would bring you happiness, that’s why he yielded that bloodstone to me. When I held onto the bloodstone, I felt that I could no longer let go of you no matter what arguments there were laid before me. That’s why ...”

Edgar left his words hanging, and looked at Lydia uneasily.

“But, are you angry? Do you think that our marriage is a mistake?”

“I don’t know. ... I was forcibly brought onto this ship without being given any time to think about it.”

Lydia lowered her gaze.

“You can’t come to terms with this, huh.”

Lydia was a little angry. Even though she had thought, troubled over it before coming to a decision, Edgar had decided based on his intuition rather than through careful consideration. He easily overturned what Lydia had desperately thought over.

“You, always did as you pleased. When I told you that I wanted to stay by your side, you left me behind; even though I told you that I did not want the

medicine you still went ahead and risked danger; I troubled over it and the moment I decided to stay by your side no matter what happened, you easily threw your life away ...”

As she listed the points, she became angrier.

“And then what’s this? You came to bid farewell, but suddenly changed your mind and brought me onto this ship. Do you think this returns everything to how it was before? Do you think that I can change my feelings immediately?”

As one would expect, even Edgar appeared to realize how unreasonable he had acted. Appearing to be flustered, he withdrew his hand which was stretched out towards Lydia.

And then, he sighed.

“When it comes to you, I can’t seem to be able to stay calm. I end up making self-satisfying decisions.”

Yet immediately, he became firm.

“But you know, I do not think the fact that both of us being here now is a mistake. I may have made many wrong decisions, but I believe that this is not self-satisfying ... I believe that even you did not want us to part that way ... Am I wrong?”

The part of him which leads Lydia around and yet be so confident about it is the same as always.

No, he probably isn’t as confident. He is looking towards Lydia, who is still looking downwards, uneasily.

“As I thought, do you want to break up?”

He asked timidly.

No, the fact that he is able to ask is precisely because he is confident. Because he wanted to draw out from Lydia the words of her not wanting to break up.

As expected, Lydia got angry.

“Are you asking me something like that?”

Isn't the answer obvious? Yet that's unfair.

As she thought that, tears started to well up in her eyes.

“If I said that I wanted to break up, will you send me back?”

As her voice trembled, she knew that he was at a loss for words because he panicked.

“I'm sorry, I can't do that. I beg you, please don't cry.... It's alright if we can't be like how we were immediately. So long as you are willing to stay as my fiancé ...”

I wonder if he is truly panicking. As she felt surprised, her anger gradually receded.

Even so, somehow her tears just wouldn't stop. It was not as if she felt sad, it was also different from being happy. She may have just been relieved but because too many things had happened, she was too confused to be honest about it.

Edgar's hand touched her cheeks and wiped away her tears. It was unusually reserved and he did not try to touch her unnecessarily.

“If you are willing, I swear that I will not make you regret this day.”

That was a serious and unwavering tone.

Lydia was finally able to lift her face up a little.

“I will not lose myself as the Blue Knight Earl. I will not be swayed by Ulysses or anyone. I will fulfill my duties.”

“But, if the Prophet appears”

“We are not the ones who will fight with “Prince’s” enemies.”

Hearing that, Lydia felt her uneasiness melt away.

Edgar may have changed a little. During that time at the spring in the Master’s Dream, he could have felt that in order to truly protect what he should be protecting, he can’t be fighting recklessly.

He may no longer end up getting closer to Prince because of Lydia.

“Lydia, you will marry me right?”

As he said that, Edgar searched around his pocket and took out something shining.

It’s the moonstone engagement ring.

The light from the sun which is just starting to rise, extended towards the ship and reflected off the moonstone.

The moon from the early morning is majestically white, shining reservedly like a bashful innocent bride.

As she finally stopped crying, Lydia nodded quietly. Edgar then took her hand and gently slid the ring onto her ring finger.

Gazing upon it satisfyingly, Edgar narrowed his eyes from the brightness.

“Dawn has finally come.”

The long nights that they spent separated was gradually turning into daylight, as it was enveloped by the soft light.